A

DISCOURSE

Concerning the

NATURE and DESIGN

OF THE

LORD's-SUPPER.

IN WHICH

The principal THINGS relating to this INSTITUTION are briefly conſidered; and ſhewn to ariſe out of one ſingle Notion of it, *viz.*

As a Memorial of the Death of CHRIST.

By *HENRY GROVE.*

The THIRD EDITION.

To which are added,

I. A DISCOURSE on the Obligations to communicate, and an Anſwer to the uſual PLEAS for neglecting it.

II. DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES relating to the LORD's-SUPPER.

LONDON,
Printed and ſold by JOHN WILSON, at the *Turk*'s-*Head* in *Gracechurch-ſtreet*.

M.DCC.XLI.

651/13

Ann. Milner



A

DISCOURSE

Concerning the

LORD'S-SUPPER.

THE *Chriſtian religion*, contained in the ſcriptures of the *New Teſtament*, is ſo call'd becauſe it is the religion of *Jeſus Chriſt*, which he taught partly in his own perſon while he was upon earth, and more fully by his *Apoſtles* after his aſcenſion into heaven; from whence he ſent down his *Holy Spirit* upon them, to lead them into the knowledge of all truth, and, by the gifts of languages, and a power of working miracles, to enable them to propagate and eſtabliſh it in all the earth. Among many things which ſhew the great excellency of this religion, not only above the falſe religions of the world, but even that of *Moſes* himſelf, (tho' that alſo was from God) we are to regard this as none of the leaſt conſiderable, that it is *a moſt reaſonable and ſpiritual ſervice*,

having but *two* duties belonging to it that are of a *poſitive nature*; that is, ſuch as *might never* have been duties, and *would never* have been ſo, without a particular and expreſs command of God for them; and theſe are *Baptiſm*, and the *Lord's-Supper*. The *outward action* in both theſe is of itſelf *indifferent*, and obliges only by vertue of its being enjoin'd by one whoſe authority we have no room to diſpute.

By *Baptiſm*, they who had embrac'd the doctrine of ſalvation by Chriſt, took upon them the publick profeſſion of it, and were receiv'd into the number of his diſciples; as all thoſe, in like manner are, to whom *Baptiſm* is now adminiſter'd. By communicating in the *Lord's-Supper*, we endeavour to keep alive in ourſelves, and to preſerve in the world, the memory of the *divine author* of that religion into which *Baptiſm* firſt enters us. This is a plain account of theſe *two* goſpel-ordinances, with regard to the firſt and moſt general deſign of each: the former hath a more immediate reſpect to *the religion itſelf* which we profeſs; the latter to the *author of it*; in remembrance of whom this inſtitution of his is to be obſerved throughout all generations.

That men, having ſufficient evidence of the truth of the goſpel, ſhould readily believe and entertain it, and believing it to be true, ſhould openly profeſs it, is *a dictate of natural reaſon*; in other words, *a moral duty*:

duty: but the obligation they are under to declare and profeſs their faith by the particular ceremony of *baptizing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt*, doth not ariſe out of the nature of the ceremony itſelf, but is wholly to be reſolv'd into the divine appointment. So *again*, that we ſhould gratefully remember our benefactors, and that perſon, therefore, above all, who hath prov'd himſelf the greateſt friend to mankind they ever had, is what reaſon and all the principles of ingenuity will not ſuffer us to be ignorant of; but *for ſetting apart bread and wine* to this uſe by *ſolemn prayer*, and then *eating and drinking in memory of our bleſſed Lord*, we have no other warrant but his expreſs command, *do this in remembrance of me*. However, there is this to be ſaid for theſe *two* rites or ceremonies, that they have nothing burdenſome and difficult in the practice of them, and will bear an eaſy and obvious application, *as ſigns* to the things *ſignified* and intended by them; which, no doubt, is *one reaſon* of their having been choſen by our Saviour for this purpoſe. I ſay, *one* reaſon; not the *only one*: ſince, beſides this, another inducement ſeems to have been, that he might not depart, farther than was neceſſary, from the received cuſtoms of the *Jews*; among whom, as frequent waſhings were a great part of their religion, ſo *John* his *Forerunner came baptizing with water*, in

token of that repentance by which they were prepared for the *kingdom of heaven*, or the goſpel diſpenſation, which was then *at hand*: and, in eating the *paſſover*, it was their manner, having taken *bread*, to bleſs and break it, and to hallow or bleſs ſeveral cups of *wine*, one of which particularly, was called the [a] *cup of bleſſing*, which is the very name that is given by St. *Paul* to the cup in the *Lord's-Supper*. But then our Saviour, adopting theſe rites into the worſhip of the *chriſtian church*, affixes another meaning and uſe to them, and preſcribes a different form of words in the adminiſtration. In a word, man being a creature very much influenced by his ſenſes, and ſo too apt to forget things ſpiritual and unſeen, it ſeemed good to the divine wiſdom ſo far to conſult his weakneſs in this reſpect, as to adorn our holy religion with theſe *two emblematical repreſentations*; which being but *two*, and admirably fitted to anſwer their end, have no need of any thing farther to be ſaid in their vindication.

Theſe ceremonial inſtitutions are commonly call'd by the name of *ſacraments*, which tho' it be no *ſcripture term*, but borrowed from the language and cuſtoms of the *Romans*, is yet retain'd, and grown into univerſal uſe; becauſe, as it originally ſignified the oath which ſoldiers took to be faithful to their general, it is properly enough

[a] 1 Cor. x. 16.

nough transfer'd to denote the affectionate zeal, and inviolable fidelity which the followers of *Jeſus*, in *Baptiſm* and the *Lord's-Supper*, profeſs and promiſe to the *captain of their ſalvation*.

SECT. I.

THESE ſacraments are,

1ſt, *A plain indication of man's being in a ſtate of apoſtacy, and diſtance from God.* The apparent meaning of theſe ſacraments ſhews it. For what is *Baptiſm? Not the putting away the filth of the fleſh*, but our becoming clean and pure in the ſight of God. Chriſt is therefore ſaid *to have loved the church, and to have given himſelf for it, that he might ſanctify and cleanſe it, with the waſhing of water, by the word; that he might preſent it to himſelf a glorious church, not having ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing, but that it ſhould be holy and without blemiſh*, Eph. v. 25, 26, 27. The ſanctification, or cleanſing, is *by the word*, or doctrine of the goſpel accompanied with the operations of the *divine ſpirit*; and only *with the waſhing of water*, or *Baptiſm*, as the *ſign* of this *moral* and *inward* cleanſing. And who are they that have need of cleanſing but ſuch as are defiled? which ſhews, that

that till we are ſanctified by the word of God, (which ſanctification is ſet forth by outward *Baptiſm*) we cannot pleaſe God. Again, what is the *Lord's-Supper*, as to one principal part of its intention, but a commemoration of the atoning ſacrifice made by Chriſt's death on the behalf of mankind? And who but ſinful rebellious creatures could need a ſacrifice of reconciliation to be offer'd for them? So far then, theſe ordinances have no very comfortable meaning. But,

2*dly*, *They are a welcome evidence, and no leſs plain, of man's being in a recoverable ſtate.* That tho' the condition of this ſinful race of creatures be without the grace and mercy of God, exceeding deplorable, yet, thro' this grace, it is not hopeleſs, but much otherwiſe; the ordinances of *Baptiſm* and the *Lord's-Supper* being on purpoſe inſtituted, in concurrence with the other means of grace, to bring us into, and build us up in, a ſtate of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt: they are *ſeals of the covenant of grace*, which out of the infinite mercifulneſs of his nature, and to ſhew his well-pleaſedneſs with the righteouſneſs and obedience of his moſt beloved Son, the great Mediator, God hath graciouſly enter'd into with ſinful men. And, here, let it be matter of joy to us, and thankſgiving to our merciful God, that when thro' the ſin of the *firſt man Adam*, and the weakneſs and diſorders of human

nature

nature thereby occaſioned, there was no more room for *a covenant of innocence*, the *ſecond man*, who is *the Lord from heaven*, *brought in a new and better covenant*; better, whether we conſider the *terms* of it, ſo admirably ſuited to our fallen ſtate, or the *grace* and the *glory promiſed*: for this invaluable covenant we are indebted, under God, to the mediation of our compaſſionate redeemer *Jeſus Chriſt*. *His death procured reconciliation with God*; *and the ſupper he bequeath'd us is a ſtanding memorial of his death.* And from hence it is I ſhall take my direction in explaining this ſacrament.

The main and direct intention of the *Lord's-Supper* is to be a perpetual commemoration, or remembrance, of *the death* of Chriſt. This appears from thoſe words of the *apoſtle Paul*, 1 *Cor.* xi. 26. *As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's death till he come.* So that we have no ſurer or eaſier method of ſettling a right and diſtinct notion of this ordinance, than to conſider the death of Chriſt, here preſented before our eyes, under thoſe ſeveral *views* in which it is capable of being contemplated by us. The following are ſome of the principal.

SECT.

SECT. II.

1ſt, WE *may conſider the death of Chriſt, as manifeſting the thoughts which they had of him, who put him to death, and the end deſigned by them in it.* The *Jews* and *Romans*, by acting this ſcene of cruelty on the innocent *Jeſus*, proclaim'd to all the world that they eſteem'd him [a] *a deceiver of the people*; for, *had they known* him *they would not have crucified the Lord of glory*: and by expoſing him as a publick ſpectacle of infamy, pain and ſorrow, their hope was they ſhould have made all men aſhamed or afraid to own him. Whereas (to ſee how little the devices of vain men avail againſt God's eternal counſel!) his being *lifted up* was the very way in which he was [b] *to draw all men unto him.* And *the ſacrament of the ſupper was appointed with this deſign, that ſhewing forth the death of Chriſt therein, we might declare to the whole world our belief of him to be, that he was a teacher ſent from God, his Holy Child Jeſus, whom he hath anointed*, notwithſtanding [c] *that Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and people of Iſrael were gathered together againſt him; and that we are not by fear or ſhame reſtrained from profeſſing ourſelves his diſciples.* The *firſt notion* then that offers itſelf to us of this ſacrament, is its being *a badge or mark of our chriſtian profeſſion.* We glory

[a] 1 Cor. ii. 8. [b] John xii. 32. [c] Acts iv. 27.

glory in that very perſon *whom the Jews crucified*, at the ſame time profeſſing to receive him as our *Lord* and *Maſter*. Nay more, we profeſs to glory in him, even *as crucified*.

(1.) We glory in that very perſon *whom the Jews crucified*, at the ſame time profeſſing to receive him as our *Lord* and *Maſter*. We are ready to cry out with the [d] *Centurion*, and thoſe that were with him, when they ſaw the prodigies that attended his crucifixion, *truly this is the ſon of God*. He is not ſo conceal'd under the veil of our fleſh, or disfigured by his ſufferings, but I can eaſily perceive his divine glory ſhining through, and acknowledge him for the greateſt perſon that ever liv'd upon earth, *the Lord of glory*, and *my Lord*. This title he accepted when given him by his diſciples, [e] *ye call me Maſter and Lord, and ye ſay well, for ſo I am*; but then we likewiſe hear him in another place ſaying, [f] *Why call you me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I command you?* So that it is not the *title* by which I can hope to pleaſe my ſaviour, without the *ſubjection* and *obedience* that is implied in it. I muſt not only *ſay well* but *do well*. I am to remember that all the precepts of the *goſpel* are the precepts of *Chriſt* my *Lord* and *Maſter*, and that conſequently, if I obey not the goſpel, I am *in*

[d] Mat. xxvii. 54. [e] John xiii. 13. [f] Luke vi. 46.

in works guilty of *denying the Lord that bought me*, and act a part too much like that of the [g] *ſoldiers*, who, having *platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand, bowed the knee to him* in mockery, *and hail'd him king*. Would I not have all that know me take notice, that I own myſelf *the diſciple of the crucified Jeſus*? But how? Not, it is to be hop'd, by this ſingle action only of eating and drinking in obedience to his command, and in honour of his memory; alas! this alone will ſignify very little, but by all the actions of my life. My whole behaviour ſhould beſpeak me *a chriſtian*, a ſervant and a follower of *Jeſus*. And if I really think him that excellent and divine perſon I profeſs to believe him, this one conſideration ſhould be enough, not *barely* to *reconcile* me to my duty, but to make me in love with it; ſince I profeſs to believe him a perſon of the higheſt dignity, that he came down from heaven in order to teach us *the moſt excellent way*, and that the ſcope and deſign of all he taught and commanded, is to make us *holy as he is holy*, that we may be fitted to live with him and his holy angels in the preſence of God for ever.

(2.) We not only profeſs ourſelves the diſciples of one that was crucified, but alſo to glory in him *as crucified*. We think this no reproach to *our bleſſed Lord* that he was treated

[g] Mat. xxvii. 29.

treated in ſo ignominious a manner by a blind and ungrateful world; or to *our religion*, that the author of it was ſlain and hanged on a tree; or to *ourſelves*, that we are the followers of one whom the main body of the *Jews* rejected; but, on the contrary, a very great honour to us, to our religion, and to our divine maſter. We are not aſham'd to ſay, Lo! this is he, *the Lord our redeemer*; we have waited for him, and he will ſave us. Let the prejudic'd Jews expreſs their abhorrence of him, and, with a mixture of ſcorn and hatred, call him *the man that was hanged* *; let them ſay, that it cannot ſo much as enter into their thoughts that the *Meſſiah* ſhould be crucified, and puniſh'd with a death which the law pronounces accurſed: I joyfully take the opportunity which the commemoration of his death, in the way that he himſelf hath commanded, gives me, to avow my faith and truſt in him, glorying in nothing more than [h] *in Chriſt crucified, to the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and unto the Greeks fooliſhneſs; but unto them that are call'd, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt the power of God and the wiſdom of God.* Had he, whom we chriſtians call and account the *Meſſiah*, been cut off for himſelf, had he deſerv'd the death which he ſuffer'd, his name would never have ſpread, as it hath done to the ends of the earth, and his cauſe have ſub-

* *As* Trypho *the Jew does in* Juſtin Martyr.

[h] 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

 ſiſted

ſiſted to this day; as, we make no doubt, it will to the period of all time. *Pilate* himſelf could obſerve that it was only [i] *for envy that the chief prieſts and elders had delivered Jeſus to him.* And the envy they betray'd on this occaſion was at once their great ſin, and a ſort of homage and acknowledgment paid by them to our Saviour's ſuperior virtues, which offended them for much the ſame reaſon as the light of the ſun does ſore eyes. " Yes, *O* " *my Jeſus*, it was only becauſe the world " was not worthy of thee that thou met'ſt " with no better uſage from the world: the " world would have lov'd its own; but be- " cauſe thou and thy kingdom were not of " this world, therefore the world hated " thee, as thou both in thy life and death " ſhew'dſt thy contempt of the world. And " ſhall I eſteem and admire thee ever the " leſs for this? No! but the more. When " I conſider the noble fruits that ſpring " from that curſed tree on which the ſon of " God expired, and that under the banner " of the croſs all nations have been brought " to the obedience of the faith, I think " with myſelf, what can be more glorious " either for our maſter, for us his diſciples, " or for the goſpel which we have received " from him, than that by ſuch unlikely " means he hath triumph'd over all the " powers of earth and hell, and made it a " more honourable thing for his followers to

[i] Mat. xxvii. 18.

" to deſpiſe worldly pomp and riches than " to enjoy them, eſteeming them as mere " trifles in compariſon of the *true riches*, " and the inviſible glories of the heaven- " ly world! Am I one of thoſe that *glory* " *in the croſs of Chriſt?* O let me take " care that I be not found in that num- " ber whom the [k] *apoſtle Paul* pronounces " enemies to our Saviour's croſs!" Every one is an enemy to the croſs of Chriſt that is not an enemy to thoſe ſins and vices, from which Chriſt died to redeem us; he ſhews himſelf an enemy in oppoſing the uſe that ought to be made of the doctrine of the croſs, and, as much as in him lies, the progreſs of that doctrine. Did *all* the followers of *Jeſus* behave no better than *ſome* of them do, how ſoon would the honours of the croſs ceaſe, and the religion of him that was crucified be blotted out from the earth? And had all that named the name of Chriſt in the beginning approv'd themſelves no better friends to him, chriſtianity, humanly ſpeaking, had been ſtifled in its birth, and the whole world, judging of the maſter by the diſciples, would have concluded that he did not ſuffer unjuſtly. With the greateſt reaſon therefore doth the *apoſtle* ſay of thoſe who trample on the rules of chriſtianity, that they are *enemies to the croſs of Chriſt*; they are the perſons that moſt of all hinder the triumphs of the croſs,

[k] Phil. iii. 18.

a-d, of all men, they have leaſt cauſe to make their boaſt in it.

Let me, before I cloſe this head, addreſs myſelf to ſuch as turn their backs on the *Lord's-table*, and beſeech them ſeriouſly to aſk themſelves a few plain queſtions. How can I number myſelf among the followers of Chriſt, and yet will not be perſuaded to join with them in an action, whereby the chriſtian ſociety is diſtinguiſh'd from all others? Muſt not my chriſtianity, as to the *external part* of it, be imperfect, if I am contented to want one principal ſign of a chriſtian? Or what ſhould I be able to ſay for myſelf, ſhould Chriſt not own me for his, upon my appearing before him without this mark of a diſciple, a ſincere love to all the inſtitutions of my bleſſed maſter? Certainly, if it ſhould be found that my neglecting the Lord's-Supper proceeded from a want of real love and reſpect to my Saviour and his commands, nothing will be ſufficient to excuſe it. *Baptiſm* puts my name on the roll of his followers; but my baptiſmal dedication, if in infancy, being not properly my own act, it is in a manner neceſſary that I ſhould make it mine, by recognizing it now that I am grown up to years of underſtanding: and how is the obligation of one ſacrament to be acknowledg'd and renew'd any way ſo well, as by putting myſelf under the bond of the other? Beſides, that *Baptiſm* hath not ſo immediate

mediate and viſible a regard to *Chriſt crucified*, as the *Lord's-Supper*, on which therefore we ſhould ſet the higheſt value; to let the world ſee that we think not this *article of our faith* any ſhame to us, or diſcredit to our religion, but a very great honour and advantage to both.

SECT. III.

2*dly*, WE *may conſider the death of Chriſt as that of a martyr, or witneſs; a martyr to the truth of his own doctrine, the firſt, and the nobleſt.* His death was entirely voluntary; [a] *no man*, ſaith he, *taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myſelf:* as they could not have taken it from him without his conſent, ſo without his conſent (could we ſuppoſe this) whatever he had ſuffer'd, tho' the conſequence of what he taught, would not have procur'd him the name of a *martyr*; for he is not a *martyr* who, having brought himſelf into the ſnare by ſome doctrine which he hath advanc'd and propagated, would be glad to get out of it again upon any terms, even tho' it were the abjuring as falſe all that he had taught for true; but he that dares ſay the ſame, in the face of the moſt threatning dangers,

[a] John x. 18.

that he had ſaid before, and chooſes rather to dye for the truth than to deny and forſake it; this all will allow to be a *real martyr*; and ſuch a *martyr* was *Jeſus Chriſt*. When upon his trial the [b] *high prieſt adjur'd him by the living God to tell him, whether he was the Chriſt the Son of God*, tho' ſilent before to all that the falſe witneſſes had alledged againſt him, and not to be provok'd to plead in his own defence, which he could eaſily have done in ſuch a manner, as to make thoſe who had the bittereſt hatred to the truth yield to the force of it, he immediately anſwers, *thou haſt ſaid*, or, I am that very perſon. *Pilate* the heathen governor, and his judge, aſks him a like queſtion, *Art thou a King then?* to which he replies, *thou ſayeſt that I am a King*; or what thou haſt now ſaid, being taken out of the form of a queſtion *, is very true, thy words are βασιλευς ει συ, thou art a King, and I am free to ſay that I am ſo; [c] *to this end was I born, and for this cauſe came I into the world that I ſhould bear witneſs to the truth.* This is that good confeſſion which St. *Paul* ſaith, he witneſſed before *Pontius Pilate*, recommending it to his ſon [d] *Timothy* for his imitation. Here are two known characters of the *Meſſiah*; for in the queſtion of the *high*

[b] Mat. xxvi. 63. [c] John xviii. 37. [d] 1 Tim. vi. 13.

* *His anſwer to the queſtion of the high prieſt may be accounted for in the ſame manner.*

high prieſt, art thou the Chriſt, the Son of God, *Chriſt* (or *Meſſiah*) and *Son of God*, ſeem to be us'd as equivalent expreſſions, which we may ſuppoſe to be the reaſon that in St. *Luke*'s relation of the ſame thing, it is only, [e] *art thou the Chriſt?* And that the *Meſſiah* was to be a *King*, the *Jews* to this day agree with us, as widely as we differ in explaining the nature of his kingdom. Our Saviour, for wiſe reaſons, had not openly and directly aſſum'd the name and titles of the *Meſſiah* till now, but now that he was ſummon'd by the magiſtrate to give witneſs to the truth, and no ill uſe could be made by the people of his owning himſelf to be a King (when his death would convince them that his kingdom was not from hence, of a worldly and temporal kind, as he then told them) he no longer ſeeks concealment, but owns himſelf to be *Meſſiah the King, and the Son of God*; tho' he was not ignorant that his ſo doing could have no other effect than to haſten his condemnation.

This our *Saviour*'s conſtancy to the death which he bore with ſo much meekneſs towards his enemies, and confidence in God, neither of which, perhaps, was ever known in a *deceiver*, in that dreadful hour, tho' they might be in one *deceiv'd*; this, I ſay, added to the miracles he had wrought, and the exemplary holineſs and goodneſs of his life,

[e] Luke xxii. 67.

life, ſhould make us think, when we are meditating on his death in this view of it, of the mighty confirmation which our faith, in the divinity of our religion, derives from hence. Would an *impoſtor*, if it were poſſible for ſuch a one to put on the appearance of the moſt unaffected ſanctity, and of all other virtues, have been able to maintain it to the very laſt, and in defence of *a known falſhood?* it cannot be. And therefore, when we ſee Jeſus Chriſt exemplifying his divine doctrine in his life, (of which more preſently) and ſealing it with his blood, we may very well conclude, that for certain all things that [f] *John ſpake of this man*, or this *man* of himſelf, or his *apoſtles* concerning him, *are true.*

But the uſe we are more immediately concern'd to make of this view of our Saviour's death, as of a martyr, is to reflect on the reaſonableneſs of his demands, that we ſhould ſacrifice every thing for the truth's ſake, not excepting life itſelf, which we muſt [g] *hate*, acting after much the ſame manner as if we did ſo, or we *cannot be his diſciples.* In all this he requires no more of us than he practis'd himſelf; which ſhould put us in mind of the *diſpoſition* with which we ſhould celebrate the memory of this glorious *martyr*, and bring us to reſolve with a humble reliance on heavenly aid, *tho' I die for thee, yet will I not deny thee: tho' all men ſhould be offended in thee, yet will*

[f] John x. 41. [g] Luke xiv. 26.

will I not be offended. That God who knoweth the hearts of all men, knows, without putting it to the trial, whether we ſhould adhere thus firmly to the cauſe of truth; and, where he ſees a preparation of mind and heart, will reward it, tho' not perhaps with the ſame crown as that of *actual martyrs*, yet, with a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

SECT. IV.

3*dly*, WE *may conſider the death of Chriſt as that of our example.* Generally, they that are put to death by the publick magiſtrate are ſet forth as examples in another ſenſe, *viz.* to warn and deter others from doing like them; but here is one who tho' treated, under a form of juſtice as the worſt of malefactors, is yet propos'd to us as an example of all virtue and goodneſs, of virtue calumniated, oppreſs'd and perſecuted, yet ſtill the ſame: ſo we are told, that [a] *Chriſt ſuffer'd for us, leaving us an example, that we ſhould follow his ſteps.* In our bleſſed Lord, we have an example of the greateſt diſintereſtedneſs, the moſt ardent zeal and concern for the good of mankind, the moſt wonderful humility and conde-

[a] 1 Pet. ii. 21.

condeſcenſion that ever was, and a reſignation and obedience to God without bounds; all which we are call'd upon to imitate in thoſe words of the apoſtle *Paul* to the *Philippians*: [b] *Let this mind be in you which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus; who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himſelf of no reputation, and took on him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſs of men, and being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf and became obedient to death, even the death of the croſs.* Could humiliation, ſubmiſſion and obedience be carried farther than this? [c] *Not my will, but thine be done.* [d] *I come to do thy will*; to do it by yielding myſelf to ſuffer it. This was the language of the bleſſed Jeſus: and as he ſpake, ſo he acted. The command to love our enemies, to forgive them that injure us, and to pray for them that deſpitefully uſe us and perſecute us, hath been reckon'd a *hard ſaying*, an objection againſt chriſtianity never to be anſwer'd. But by whom is this eſteem'd ſo unreaſonable? One would think only by ſuch as have not *read*, or do not *believe*, or at beſt do not *conſider*, the hiſtory of *our Saviour's paſſion*. Other anſwers might be return'd, but, waving them, let us leave *his example*, particularly when he was on the croſs, to ſilence this objection againſt *his precepts*. [e] *Father, forgive*

[b] Phil. ii. 5—8. [c] Luke xxii. 42. [d] Heb. x. 7.
[e] Luke xxiii. 34.

forgive them, for they know not what they do. The beſt excuſe that could poſſibly be made in their favour, and accompanied with a prayer, which, from ſuch a perſon, and in ſuch circumſtances, did not, and could not, fail of ſucceſs. What filial truſt did he exerciſe in God, at a time when the whole world was turn'd againſt him, and God himſelf had withdrawn the uſual manifeſtations of his preſence! [f] *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* He ſtill calls him his God, not quitting his hold of him; and breathes out his holy ſoul into the boſom of his love; [g] *Father, into thy hands I commend my ſpirit.* So ſhould we learn to maintain a humble hope in God, when the ſcene of providence looks moſt dark and melancholy; and be ſo far from judging of our intereſt in the divine favour by outward events, as not to conclude any thing againſt ourſelves, merely from the want of thoſe ſenſible refreſhments and exultations of ſpirit which we may have ſometimes experienc'd. What good people call *ſpiritual deſertion*, is many times nothing more than a depreſſion and ſadneſs of mind; an interruption, not in the life and activity of their graces, but, in the comforts afforded by them; ſomewhat of the ſame *kind* with that eclipſe which our Saviour ſuffered in his laſt hours, but vaſtly ſhort of it in *degree*.

We

[f] Mat. xxvii. 46. [g] Luke xxiii. 46.

We ſhould, moreover, regard Chriſt's *dying* behaviour, as finiſhing the *example* of his *life*. Were we only to judge of him by his death, we might from thence form a pretty certain conjecture of what his life had been, as from the manner of his life, nothing elſe could be expected but ſuch a death; a death by which he glorified God, and inſtructed and edified mankind: we ſee one and the ſame inward principle of love to that which is good exerting itſelf with a moſt vigorous influence, and perfect uniformity in all he did, and all he ſuffer'd: he had long before invited the world to learn of him meekneſs and lowlineſs of mind, and all the difference in this reſpect between the cloſe of his life, and the reſt of it was, that his ſufferings being then more grievous, he had an opportunity to ſhew theſe virtues in a fairer light than they had ever appeared in before. He had always gone up and down doing good, and as his life, ſo his death was directed to the benefit of mankind: the ſpirit of piety and devotion that animated him was remarkable; his ſoul was always on the wing, and what time he could borrow from the offices of friendſhip, and kindneſs, and inſtruction towards *men*, he ſpent in prayer to *God*; and the ſupport he had from hence, and the great advantage it was of to him, in the laſt and darkeſt ſcene of his life, is

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as eaſily conceivable; *Father, the hour is come*——[h] *I have glorified thee on earth, I have finiſhed the work which thou haſt given me to do; and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thy ownſelf, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* The holy life which he had led, and the glory that was to follow, brighten'd the gloomy path which his ſoul then trod. How he ſtood affected to the world and all its enjoyments he had ſhewn all along before; [i] *being rich for our ſakes he became poor, that we thro' his poverty might be made rich*; and not think the happineſs of life to conſiſt in the abundance of the things which a man poſſeſſes, or that this world is the proper abode of felicity: and he ended a poor and mean, but not inglorious life, with a painful and ſhameful death, that we by him may be taught how to get above the love of the one, and the fear of the other. He pleaſed not himſelf, was not guilty of ſenſual indulgences, did not form his conduct upon fancy, or cuſtom, or paſſion, prefer'd heaven from whence he came, to earth whither he deſcended, only on a viſit of compaſſion; behav'd gravely, uſefully, and holy, and, like the ſetting ſun, appear'd greateſt at the end of his courſe.

" O Jeſus! I now ſee what I have to do " when I ſhew forth thy death in thy Sup- " per. I am to contemplate the heavenly

[h] John xvii. 4. [i] 2 Cor. viii. 9.

" tues and graces that then ſhone forth in
" thee, after having been exhibited in the
" whole courſe of thy life, and to excite
" and oblige myſelf to imitate them. I
" am determin'd to follow thee, tho' it be
" at a long diſtance between, and ſhall
" make it my ambition to reſemble thee in
" every part of my behaviour, whether to-
" wards God, towards men, or with re-
" gard to myſelf. Was it uſual in the pri-
" mitive church, when they commemora-
" ted the deaths of the martyrs, to recite
" their laudable actions, and worthy qua-
" lities? I will be thankful for their ex-
" amples, and thoſe of all other good men,
" and be followers of them as far forth as
" they were ſo of my Saviour, but no far-
" ther. Thy example, O moſt holy Jeſus,
" is that which I intend to have continual-
" ly before me, and while I behold thy
" body hanging on the croſs, I will endea-
" vour to copy and deſcribe the amiable
" virtues of thy ſoul upon my own! My
" aim ſhall be to be [k] crucified to the world
" by thy croſs, and to have the world cru-
" cified to me; to be zealouſly affected in
" that which is good, and meekly patient
" under affliction and trouble; to be actua-
" ted by the ſame ſpirit, and to live and
" die like thee."

[k] Gal. vi. 14.

SECT.

SECT. V.

4thly, *THE death of Chriſt may be conſider'd as a demonſtration of the moſt aſtoniſhing love that ever was, both of the Father and of the Son; of the Father in giving his Son to die for us, and of the Son of God who ſo freely offer'd himſelf.* [a] *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* And whereas it is the obſervation of our Lord, that [b] *greater love than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friend,* God hath herein [c] *commended his love to us, that while we were yet ſinners Chriſt died for us,* that we who had been *enemies might be reconciled to God by the death of his Son.* We ſee the greatneſs of this love in the *greatneſs or dignity of the perſon* ſuffering, and his nearneſs to God, being his [d] *only-begotten Son who lay in the boſom of the Father:* in the *greatneſs of the ſufferings* voluntarily ſubmitted to by him; he ſuffered death, even the ſhameful and painful death of the croſs: in the *great unworthineſs* of the perſons to whom this extraordinary favour was ſhewn, *ſinners*, and *enemies* to God by ſin: and, *finally*, in the *ſurpaſſing greatneſs of the benefits* thence reſulting, all of them iſſuing into, and as it were ſumm'd

[a] John iii. 16. [b] John xv. 12. [c] Rom. v. 8,—10. [d] John i. 18.

up in, that now mention'd, *eternal life*. Chriſt's willingneſs to die for the advantage we ſhould receive from his dying teſtimony to the truth of his religion, and his moſt inſtructive and affecting example, muſt be thankfully own'd as a proof of his love; but the greateſt proofs of that love are yet behind.

To perpetuate the memory of his dying love, our bleſſed Saviour inſtituted his ſupper, to be obſerv'd till his ſecond coming, commanding his diſciples to do it in remembrance of him. For which reaſon it may ſeem unaccountable, that there ſhould be any ſo *miſtaken*, as to deny this ſacrament, or ſo *ungrateful* as to allow themſelves, without any manner of uneaſineſs, in the neglect of it, which I fear is done by a great many who own the inſtitution. The *apoſtles* and *firſt chriſtians* religiouſly kept this ordinance, and much oftner than we do now, though they had the death of Chriſt freſh in their memories, and ſo could not be ſuppos'd to need a ſenſible repreſentation of it, and of his love manifeſted therein, ſo much as we who live at ſo remote a diſtance from the *time* and *place* of our Saviour's death. Did not Chriſt die for us as well as for them? and, if ſo, are we not equally oblig'd to celebrate his love in dying for us? was not this Supper inſtituted for our ſake as much as for theirs? and, in one reſpect, more, as we are now in greater danger of forgetting

our

our benefactor; becauſe it is now longer ſince that he liv'd upon earth, and died to procure the benefits of redemption for us? and ought we not thankfully to obſerve an inſtitution which doth ſo mightily aſſiſt our faith and gratitude; an inſtitution which the primitive chriſtians obſerv'd as much oftner than we, as upon the account now mentioned, they needed it leſs? Such a friend and lover of ſouls as Chriſt hath ſhewn himſelf, deſerves never to be forgotten, and, doubtleſs, never will as long as there is a church upon earth, purchaſed with his blood, founded by his preaching, and preſerv'd by his providence. But then we have reaſon to believe that it is by this ordinance, which like a pillar bears his name inſcrib'd upon it, that a lively memory of him is kept up in the church. The unparallel'd love of Jeſus ſhould be our daily meditation; but we muſt not think that this excludes the advantage, and even neceſſity of an ordinance, in which it is remember'd after a more open and ſolemn manner. The worſhip of God is to be perform'd every day, in the cloſet, and in the family, notwithſtanding which God ſaw it requiſite to ſet apart one day in ſeven for the more auguſt and publick performance of his worſhip; and that there is any ſuch thing as true religion in the world we may reckon, in great meaſure, owing to the obſervation of the *Lord's-Day*; as it

is to be attributed to the *Lord's-Supper* that the memory of Chriſt's love ſpreads and flouriſhes in his church. And I am ready to think that they who cannot be prevailed on to commemorate the love of Chriſt at his table, are not the perſons who ſtand in leaſt need of this aſſiſtance. This then is another notion which we are to form of the *Lord's-Supper*; it is *the means appointed to eternize the memory of Chriſt's dying love, and of the love of God declar'd by the ſame event.* And, oh, let not the remembrance of his death ever die! but let our love, inflam'd and ſtrengthen'd by this holy ordinance, keep alive the memory of his. We merit to be eternally forgotten of God, if we can forget our redeemer.

But why is Chriſt ſo deſirous that his love ſhould be had in everlaſting remembrance? is it only that it may be the ſubject of a barren admiration? or merely for the ſake of our praiſes, and that he may have a name upon earth? Alas! theſe are low ends for the Son of God to propoſe; who being the wonder of angels, and the delightful theme of their ſongs, needs not, ſurely, covet the applauſes of ſuch poor ignorant and ſinful mortals as we are. No, we muſt carry our thoughts farther. The *love of God*, and *our neighbour*, are the *two commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets*; and both theſe have a new life and ſtrength deriv'd into them from the love of God,

God, and of Jeſus repreſented in the ſacrament of the Supper. [c] *Here is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us*; but then, for this very reaſon we are to love him the more, that he [f] *firſt loved us.* Next to God, who is love, we are to love his Son who hath loved us, and given himſelf for us; and becauſe God hath ſo loved us, [g] *we ought alſo to love one another*; for this is *the commandment of God, that he who loveth God, love his brother alſo*; and the ſame is Chriſt's *new commandment* to his diſciples. We have all a better title to one another's love than any of us can pretend to have had to the love of God; and ſhall prove ourſelves doubly unworthy of this love, if we refuſe to make ſo eaſy and ſo reaſonable a return for it as this of brotherly affection. 'Tis an additional motive to univerſal love, that we are all comprehended and embraced in the arms of divine love. And how is our love to diſcover itſelf? why, if occaſion be, [h] *in laying down our lives for the brethren.* And ſurely then, much more in a readineſs to bear their burthens, to relieve their neceſſities, and to diſcharge all the other offices of kindneſs and good-will to them, ſince no one who is in a diſpoſition of mind to give the greateſt inſtance of love, can be backward to do that which is much leſs. "Thy love, O my Saviour, conſtraineth me

"to

[c] John iv. 19. [f] 1 John iv. 10. [g] John xiii. 34. [h] 1 John iii. 16.

" to all this; becauſe I thus judge, that
" thou diedſt for me, that I ſhould not live
" to myſelf, but to thee! And what am I
" to underſtand by living to thee, but do-
" ing thoſe things which will be moſt ac-
" ceptable to thee, and moſt ſerviceable to
" the cauſe of religion, that is, the cauſe of
" Jeſus, in the world? what but my being
" juſt, and charitable, and holy, and, in a
" word, behaving ſo that the world may
" receive ſome of thoſe advantages, and in
" a leſſer degree, from me and others of
" the ſame ſpirit with me, as they would in
" greater number, and much higher de-
" gree reap from thy preſence and compa-
" ny, if thou thyſelf wert upon earth; and
" ſo thy ſpirit, breathing and acting in us,
" and ſhedding its benign influences upon
" all around us, may in ſome meaſure ſup-
" ply thy perſonal abſence!"

SECT. VI.

5*thly*, THE *death of Chriſt may be conſider'd as that of a ſacrifice, by which the diſpleaſure of God was atoned, and the ſin of man expiated.* We may here ſay as our Lord's forerunner, when he pointed him out to the *Jews*, [a] *Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the ſin of the world!* Once

[a] John i. 29.

[b] *Once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf.* [c] *He bore our ſins in his own body on the tree.* Now Chriſt's death having thus the nature of a publick ſacrifice, we may regard the Supper he was pleas'd to inſtitute, as *a commemorative repreſentation of this ſacrifice*, and as *a feaſt upon it.*

1. The *Lord's-Supper* is *a commemorative repreſentation of the ſacrifice which our redeemer made of himſelf on the croſs.* This is the language of the inſtitution itſelf: from that we learn, that *the bread we eat, is* (repreſentatively) *the body of Chriſt that was given for us*, and *the cup we drink of is* (in the ſame ſenſe) [d] *the blood of Chriſt which was ſhed for us.* The death of Chriſt was a true *propitiatory ſacrifice*, and, as ſuch, is commemorated in the ſacrament of the Supper. But the *Lord's-Supper* is not, and indeed cannot be, itſelf ſuch a ſacrifice as the *papiſts* affirm, becauſe it is a commemorative ſign of it; and common ſenſe will teach us, that the ſign and the thing ſignified by it cannot be the ſame. However, as was juſt now obſerv'd, it is a repreſentation of that ſacrifice; very faint indeed, but not inſignificant; and every time the believer takes the conſecrated elements, he doth, as it were, lay his hands upon the ſacrifice repreſented by them, and plead with God in virtue

[b] Heb. ix. 26. [c] 1 Pet. ii. 24. [d] Luke xxii. 19, 20.

virtue of it for pardon and acceptance; hereby uniting his prayers, and all that he does in the ſervice of God, to the interceſſion of the *great high prieſt*, who is paſſed into the heavens. The *third* and the *ninth* hours among the *Jews* (their *three* anſwering to our *nine o'clock* in the *morning*, and their *nine* to our *three* in the *afternoon*) were call'd *hours of prayers*, becauſe theſe were the times of *the daily ſacrifice*, and the burning of incenſe, when the people choſe to offer their prayers, that they might accompany the ſacrifices in the temple, and become more acceptable in conjunction with them. Thus in all our approaches to the throne of divine grace, whether in publick or private, on the day of ſacred reſt, or at any other time, we ſhould be mindful of the ſacrifice of the croſs, and the interceſſion of our high prieſt, founded upon it, in *the holy of holies* above; and *having an altar whereof they had no right to eat, who ſerv'd the tabernacle*, ſhould *by him*, who was our ſacrifice, and is ſtill our high prieſt, [e] *offer the ſacrifice of praiſe to God continually; that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.* But tho' the ſacrifice of Chriſt be a main ground of our hope, and what, being ſinful creatures, we are concern'd chiefly to have reſpect to in all our religious performances; yet when we behold this ſacrifice repreſented in the actions perform'd at the *Lord's-*

[e] Heb. xiii. 10—15.

Lord's-Table, we ſeem to have a kind of ſignal given us to apply by faith to this ſacrifice, and a more than ordinary advantage and opportunity for the exerciſe of our faith in it. Hiſtory gives us an account of an *Egyptian Nobleman*, who, out of his great affection to the memory of his ſon, had an image of him plac'd in the houſe, to which the ſervants, having committed a fault, would flee for protection, finding it their beſt refuge from the anger of their lord. Here we, who have grievouſly offended God, take refuge by faith in Chriſt himſelf, his once-dead, but now ever-living Son; in the lively exerciſes of which faith, we are very much aſſiſted by the repreſentation of our Saviour's ſufferings, exhibited to us in his Supper. "I have ſinned, and bluſh to "lift up my face to thee, my God; but ſee "here what thy beloved Son hath ſuffered "for my ſins! let thy juſtice behold this "ſacrifice, and, after that ſight hath diſ-"arm'd it, let it then ſtrike!"

There are two things, more eſpecially, which we are taught by the repreſentation of Chriſt's ſacrifice in the Sacramental Supper, *viz. the great evil of ſin, and God's readineſs to pardon it*, which we are to conſider as an argument of his great goodneſs. We ſee the evil of ſin in the ſufferings of other men, and feel it in our own; but not all the infelicities of human life, nor death reigning from *Adam* to the laſt generation

of

of men that ſhall be upon earth, can afford us that convincing, that affecting evidence of the evil of ſin, as the ſufferings and death of the Son of God. Muſt he, that excellent perſon, ſtyl'd *the Son of God* to denote his *dignity*, and *the lamb of God* to ſignify his *innocence*, die to expiate the guilt of ſin? and how great then muſt that guilt be which needed ſuch an expiation? and why am I from the dolorous paſſion of my Saviour to take occaſion to reflect on the evil of ſin, but that I may be excited to hate it more than ever, and to reſolve and watch againſt it? This, I am ſenſible, is the end deſign'd; and I do now therefore renounce all league and friendſhip with ſin, and, both out of hatred to that, and love to my Saviour, intend to purſue it to its utter and final deſtruction. And great is the encouragement I have to do ſo; ſince in the ordinance before me, I have a ſort of *ocular demonſtration* that God is ready to forgive all ſin; which ſhews that *he is as good, as ſin is evil.* Chriſt died as a ſacrifice; and if this ſacrifice was not accepted, wherefore is this perpetual memorial of it? if inſufficient, why is there not a repetition of the ſacrifice itſelf, but only of the repreſentation of it? Without controverſy, God is in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf, and is actually reconcil'd to all that repent. *The hope of forgiveneſs is eſſential to the religion of fallen creatures*, and one of the firſt and moſt active

tive principles of it: and where this *hope* is rais'd into *aſſurance*, as it is by the *ſacrifice* of Chriſt which we here commemorate, may it not be expected to be the ſpring of the moſt cheerful, moſt conſtant, and univerſal obedience? I can no more think that God will reject my ſincere and faithful ſervice of him, tho' attended with many ſinful failings and defects, than that he will accept me, and be pleas'd with me if I continue in the habitual practice of any ſin. His pardoning and receiving thoſe that forſake their ſins, and puniſhing, the more ſeverely, ſuch as will not be perſuaded to do it, are equally plain from this inſtance of God's love to ſinners, and hatred of ſin. The death of Chriſt renders ſin *more pardonable*, but not *leſs hateful*, rather abundantly more ſo: I will therefore *hope* in the mercy of God becauſe Chriſt died; but, for that very reaſon, that he died, I will not *preſume* upon it; for if ſo much was done to *the green tree* (to him that was righteous and innocent, and ſo like green wood not fit fuel for the fire) [f] *what ſhall be done to the dry*; to thoſe who by impenitency in a ſinful courſe render themſelves *veſſels of wrath fitted for deſtruction*; as much fitted for it as dry wood is to burn?

2. The *Lords-Supper* is *a feaſt upon a ſacrifice*. It is called *a feaſt*, in alluſion to the *Jewiſh paſſover*, for [g] *Chriſt our paſſover is ſa-*

[f] Luke xxiii. 31. [g] 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

crificed

trificed for us: and as the *Jews* feaſted upon their paſchal lamb, after it had been firſt preſented to God, ſo do we, *ſacramentally*, and *by faith*, upon ours. This conſideration of it will ſuggeſt ſeveral things of great uſe and importance to our thoughts.

(1.) As *a feaſt* it is very expreſſive of the *communion of ſaints*. Eating and drinking together was ever accounted a mark of friendſhip, and a likely way of eſtabliſhing the union; eſpecially if a feaſt was added to this very end; for, as one obſerves, this amounted to a mutual promiſe of the parties concern'd to live in peace and unity among themſelves. [h] By how many endearing ties doth Chriſt preſerve the unity of his body the church! and yet all little enough to keep the members of it faſt knit to one another! *Of all the external bands of chriſtian love there is none of that efficacy as the holy communion:* wherefore, it is recorded of the primitive diſciples, [i] *that they continued ſtedfaſtly in the apoſtles doctrine and fellowſhip, and in breaking of bread and in prayers; and that the multitude of them that believ'd were of one heart and one ſoul.* If they that are of the ſame family, and eat at the ſame table, cannot agree, they muſt be of a very unhappy temper indeed. [k] *We being many are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.* Now if they, who joining in the ſame

[h] *Vid.* Gen. xxvi. 28—30. [i] Acts ii. 42. iv. 32.
[k] 1 Cor. x. 17.

ſame ſacraments, and receiving the ſame ſpirit, are incorporated into one myſtical body, and united to one head, are not able to maintain a tolerable harmony among themſelves, let us never wonder that others differ. Should not their care be at all times, and by all means, [1] *to keep the unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace?* is not this the leſſon we learn from our Lord's inſtituting his *Supper?* and one thing which we promiſe when we meet at his table? Let chriſtians reflect on the agreement among perſons confederated in any wicked deſign, and bluſh to think that common guilt ſhould do more to hold ſuch men together, than the ſame common privileges and common hopes to prevent diſſentions among them. And, were this a proper place for it, we might farther remark it, as matter of the greateſt lamentation of all, that the ſacrament of the *Supper* which ſhould be *the center of union* to the *chriſtian world*, inſtead of always anſwering that end, hath too often been one of the chief engines to divide men into parties, and the principal means to ſharpen and halloo the zeal of one party againſt another. We need not go ſo far back as the animoſities among ſome foreign proteſtants *in the beginning of the reformation*; I fear, we have too many inſtances nearer home. Is it that this ſacrament hath of itſelf this tendency? or becauſe men cannot

[1] Eph. iv. 3.

be contented to let others enjoy the ordinances of the goſpel in that *ſimplicity* in which Chriſt left them to his immediate followers, nor on the ſame *terms of communion* as were then thought ſufficient? be that as it may; the duty of all communicants lies plain. Does a perſon [m] *love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity?* 'tis certain he belongs to the *communion of ſaints*, whether he be of the particular communion that I am a member of, or of ſome other; tho' it ſhould be of one from which I am excluded, becauſe not able to comply, without offending my conſcience with the conditions requir'd. In this caſe, I am not preſently to ſhut him out from a ſhare in my affections; but to account him as a brother whether he will call me by that name or no: and when I think that all good chriſtians are of the *ſame family*, and united to the *ſame head*, how diſtant ſoever in place, or, perhaps, in opinion, I am to ſtretch my heart as wide as poſſible I can, that I may take them in all; remembring that the ſame heaven will receive us at laſt, tho' the ſame place, thro' neceſſity, or from ſome unhappy miſtake, cannot hold us upon earth.

(2.) The *Lord's-Supper*, being *a feaſt on a ſacrifice, we have fellowſhip therein with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* The tabernacle, or temple, under the law, was *the houſe*

[m] Eph. vi. 24.

houſe of God, the altar his *table*, and the ſacrifices brought to be offer'd there were no longer the offerer's, but the [n] *proviſions of God's houſe*, and are therefore called *the bread*, or food, *of God:* ſo that when the offerer was admitted to partake of his own ſacrifice, he was not to conſider it as his own, but as God's, and to look upon himſelf as God's gueſt. And is not every *chriſtian church* the *Lord's houſe*, tho' not in exactly the ſame ſenſe as the *temple* was ſo? is not the communion-table called [o] *the table of the Lord?* and what is provided, the *Lord's-Supper?* and the ſacramental cup, in particular, the *cup of the Lord?* "Think, "therefore, O my ſoul, of the honour to "which thou art rais'd! that the Lord "Jeſus Chriſt is *maſter of the feaſt*, and that "God himſelf vouchſafes his preſence, and "bids every worthy receiver welcome to "the entertainments of his houſe! this "is ſomething more than to be a gueſt at "the table of the greateſt perſon upon "earth; for here thou art the gueſt of "God; as truly ſo, tho' not entertain'd "with the ſame magnificence as thoſe "whom he hath advanc'd to dwell in his "heavenly palace!" The *apoſtle Paul* takes notice, that they who pertook of the ſacrifices offer'd to idols, or *dæmons*, had fellowſhip with thoſe dæmons, and were thereby

[n] Levit. xxi. 6. [o] 1 Cor. x. 21. xi. 20.

diſqualified from having [p] fellowſhip with Chriſt, by drinking of his *cup*, and partaking of his *table*. It will not be amiſs if we ſometimes conſider that our forefathers, being *idolatrous Gentiles*, were among thoſe who were in friendſhip with *falſe Gods*, and ſtrangers to the *true*; while we, their deſcendants, [q] *are brought nigh by the blood of Chriſt*, much nearer than our heathen anceſtors; nay nearer than *God's peculiar people* themſelves under *the law:* for, agreeably to the ſuperior excellency of our ſacrifice, is our greater [r] freedom of acceſs to God; who, having beſtow'd on us the adoption of ſons, hath [s] *ſent forth the ſpirit of his ſon into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father*; not *the ſpirit of bondage*, but *the ſpirit of adoption*; to encourage which filial ſpirit, and humble boldneſs towards God, the whole frame of the goſpel-diſpenſation is viſibly fitted, and particularly the ordinance of the *Supper:* we are now treated more as *children*, and are, emphatically ſpeaking, *a people near unto the Lord.*

Now, ſince ſuch is the nature of this ordinance, that [t] *the bread which we break is the communion of the body of Chriſt, and the cup of bleſſing which we bleſs is the communion of the blood of Chriſt*, what manner of perſons ought *chriſtian communicants* to be in all purity of heart, and holineſs? of converſation,

[p] 1 Cor. x. 20, 21. [q] Eph. ii. 13. [r] Gal. iv. 6. [s] Rom. viii. 15. [t] 1 Cor. x. 16.

tion, who are receiv'd into this intimate converſe with the holy God, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt the image of his holineſs? [u] *What communion hath light with darkneſs? If we ſay we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs, we lie, and do not the truth*; [x] *but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowſhip one with another*; *and the blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin*: we are, doubtleſs, at beſt unworthy of this communion with God, and not ſo well qualified for it as were to be deſir'd. And hereupon we might be ready to queſtion our being privileg'd with ſo near an approach to him, but that he hath put it out of all doubt by condeſcending to our weakneſs, and, in a manner, appealing to our very ſenſes, in order to convince us of his entire readineſs to receive us, worthleſs as we are, and unfit as we are for his ſociety, to dwell with us. He that inviteth us to his *table* will not deny us his preſence and converſe there. Let us acknowledge our unpreparedneſs for communion with God, and the backwardneſs of our bad hearts to it; but let us not doubt of God's willingneſs to have communion with us; provided only that we come not in our moral uncleanneſs or pollution; for we are never to forget this, that *without holineſs* we can no more be really *nigh to God* in this world, than we can *ſee his face* in the next: and

[u] 2 Cor. vi. 14. [x] 1 John i. 5, 6.

and it would be very ſtrange if any ſhould be ſo exceeding fooliſh, as to think of putting the *blood* of Chriſt itſelf, and the ſacrament of his *Supper* in the room of this *holineſs*, when both theſe do ſo clearly inſinuate the abſolute neceſſity of it.

(3.) The *Lord's-Supper* being *a feaſt upon a ſacrifice*, there ſeems to be ſufficient ground for our conſidering it as *a ſolemn form of renewing our covenant with God*; and *a means* and *ſign* of our participating in the bleſſings of the covenant. The book of the law, containing the promiſes of God to the people of *Iſrael*, and the terms upon which theſe promiſes would be fulfill'd to them, is therefore call'd *the book of the covenant*; and, becauſe when this book was read in the audience of the people, who promis'd that all that the Lord had ſaid they would do and be obedient, there were beaſts offered in ſacrifice, with the blood of which *Moſes* ſprinkled the people, to denote the ſolemn ratification of God's covenant with them; this blood, therefore, hath the name given it of the [y] *blood of the covenant:* in like manner, the *goſpel* being God's new covenant with all ſuch as believe in Jeſus Chriſt, as the *New Teſtament*, in which the goſpel is recorded, may very properly be ſtyl'd *the book of the covenant*; ſo *the blood of Chriſt*, by which this covenant was confirm'd, is expreſly call'd [z] *the blood of the covenant*. The cove-

[y] Exod. xxiv. 7, 8. [z] Heb. x. 29.

covenant of grace hath an eſſential reſpect to the ſacrifice of the croſs, as the foundation upon which it reſts; and foraſmuch as in the *Lord's-Supper* we both *ſacramentally* and *ſpiritually* partake of this ſacrifice, it does very naturally ſuggeſt the thought of renewing, by and through this worthy ſacrifice, our covenant with God, and the dedication of ourſelves and all that we have to him. In the *50th Pſalm* we have an *edict* from the king of heaven publiſh'd in the following form of words, *Gather my ſaints together unto me, thoſe that have made a covenant with me by ſacrifice.* This is ſpoken of God's antient people, who enter'd into covenant with him at the very time that the ſacrifice was kill'd and offer'd. Whereas, here, the ſacrifice is firſt offered, and offered once for all; and then, with an eye to this ſacrifice, we covenant with God, one perſon after another, and one generation after another, either *ſingly*, as in *Baptiſm*, or a *whole ſociety* together, as in the *Lord's-Supper*. The firſt time of our approaching the *Lord's-Table* may, upon ſome accounts, be the moſt awful, as we then firſt of all communicate in the memorials of our Saviour's body and blood, and by theſe ſacred ſymbols confirm and ſolemnize our dedication to God: but, then we renew this dedication, or covenant, every time we receive the holy communion. 'Tis true,

true, when Chriſts ſays, [a] *this cup is the New Teſtament*, or covenant, *in my blood*, the direct meaning ſeems to be no more than this, that the ſacramental wine is a figure or memorial of the blood of Chriſt, by which the new covenant was eſtabliſh'd. However, becauſe in the *Lord's-Supper* we do ſacramentally eat the fleſh, and drink the blood of Chriſt, we may therefore be allow'd to look on this ordinance as *a form of covenanting* between God and us, and *a ſeal of the covenant* both on his part and ours. When *Abraham* is ſaid to have receiv'd the ſign of circumciſion, *a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith*, what are we to underſtand by this metaphor of *a ſeal* but the aſſurance which God gave *Abraham* [b], by this external ſign of the acceptableneſs of his faith, for the ſake of which he was pleaſed to eſtabliſh his covenant with him? the metaphor is borrowed from a well-known cuſtom of making things firm and certain by ſetting a ſeal to them. And why may not the *Lord's-Supper* be, for much the ſame reaſon, eſteemed a ſeal of God's covenant with us, being a viſible ſign or token of his covenant-favour towards us? The ſoul, by faith, may hear God ſpeaking to it after ſome ſuch manner as this: "Come hither, "O thou whom I love; I do here promiſe "upon the body and blood of my Son to "be thy God, and to do for thee all that "can

[a] Luke xxii. 19. [b] Rom. iv. 11.

" can be expected from that title; and let
" this body and blood be witneſs between
" me and thee, for the performance of my
" promiſe. With all poſſible humility and
" grateful joy (replies the ſoul) do I accept
" thy offer, O moſt merciful God, and on
" the ſame ſacred pledges I promiſe to be
" thine, taking thee, *O Father Almighty*,
" for my God and father, my ſovereign
" owner, and everlaſting portion: Thee,
" *O Son of God*, for my all-ſufficient redeemer
" and only advocate; and putting myſelf
" into the hands, and under the conduct,
" of the *holy ſpirit* as my ſanctifier and
" guide, my helper and comforter, I pre-
" ſent myſelf a living ſacrifice, holy, ac-
" ceptable to God, which is my reaſonable
" ſervice: I take the precepts of the goſ-
" pel for the rule of all my Actions, and
" rely upon the promiſes of it as the im-
" moveable foundation of my hopes: I
" reſign myſelf to thy diſpoſal, acknow-
" ledge myſelf bound to live to thy glory,
" and vow by thy grace to be obedient
" and faithful to the death: this is not
" the firſt time I have thus covenanted,
" but I now chearfully renew the engage-
" ment, being ſenſible that I cannot be
" bound too faſt: I am continually in
" fear, if the cords be not ſtrengthened,
" leſt in this fluctuating world I ſhould
" break from my anchor, and be driven
" off from thee: I do here therefore again

" upon

" upon the body and blood of Chriſt ſwear " to be obedient and faithful. Lord, thou " art witneſs to my oath, be thou my " help!" Can any thing be conceiv'd more awful and binding than a covenant ſo tranſacted?

It follows, that the *Lord's-Supper* is a *means* and *ſign* of our participating in *the benefits of the covenant*; ſuch as peace of conſcience, joy in the Holy Ghoſt, ſtrength of grace, and more overflowing hopes of future bleſſedneſs. I have not mention'd the *pardon of ſin*, becauſe whenever the ſinner repents, and applies to *the blood of ſprinkling*, his ſins are immediately forgiven him: his pardon is not delay'd till he comes to the *Sacrament*; nor, if a man comes to it in an unrepenting and unpardon'd ſtate, does he go away juſtified, only for the merit of this action; which, I fear, is the miſtaken notion of ſome, who ſeem to make uſe of the *Sacrament*, as too many in the *church of Rome* do of *confeſſion to a prieſt*, to pay off the old ſcore, that they may go upon a new one; a miſtake too dangerous to be ſlighted, and too abſurd to need a long confutation. All ſuch thoughts are effectually overturn'd by this one conſideration, that the only terms of forgiveneſs are *faith* and *repentance*; faith working by love, and repentance iſſuing in obedience: ſo that where theſe are, there is forgiveneſs; where theſe are wanting, in vain does any one take ſanctuary at the

Lord's

Lord's-Table, which can no more afford ſhelter to ſuch than the altar did to the murderer that fled to it. The law is expreſs, [c] *Thou ſhalt take him from my altar that he may die.* But tho' God hath no where tied the forgiveneſs of ſin to mens receiving the *Sacrament*; yet ſince *forgiveneſs itſelf*, and *the comfortable ſenſe* of that forgiveneſs are two things, and the latter admits of variety of degrees; we may hope to find great advantages by conſcientiouſly attending on the *Lord's-Supper*, with regard to *the aſſurance* of God's forgiving love, and a larger effuſion of the ſpirit of light and holineſs and conſolation upon us: of all this the *Sacrament* of the *Supper* is *a proper means*, as it tends to beget in us thoſe pious affections and holy purpoſes on which God will never fail to confer his covenant bleſſings. What thankfulneſs! what love! what indignation! what zeal! what deſire muſt the ſight of what is here beheld, raiſe in an ingenuous mind! Thankfulneſs to God, love to Jeſus, indignation againſt ſin, zeal in the ſervice of our dear Lord, and deſire of being approv'd and accepted of him. No ordinance better fitted than this to kindle devout affections, wherein we have *the prince* of *life* crucified before our eyes, ſuffering, bleeding, groaning, dying; and all this for our ſakes; to ſave us, and deſtroy ſin: a ſcene fitted to work on all our paſſions, and at the ſame time to engage

[c] Exod. xxi. 14.

the concurrence of our reaſonable powers. Our affections in this ordinance can never be wrought up to that degree (I mean the affections beforemention'd) but that our *reaſon* will approve of it, and even require more: to which let me add, that receiving the *Sacrament* being, in reſpect of the ſincere chriſtian, an act of obedience and love, both to God, and his Saviour, he may warrantably expect that it ſhall not go unrewarded. He comes becauſe it is his duty; and his duty is his delight; and will not God beſtow ſome marks of his ſpecial favour upon his willing and chearful ſervant? And then, as this *Sacrament* is *a means*, ſo, to every worthy receiver, it is a *ſign* of his participating in the benefits of the covenant. "For ſurely, O my ſoul, this eating and drinking was not ordained to "be an empty, idle ceremony! The thing "ſignified is thy feeding by faith on the "body and blood of Chriſt; or rather "thy communicating in the glorious and "happy effects of his body broken, and "blood ſhed! So, indeed thou doſt at o-"ther times; but more particularly now "that thy faith in a crucified Saviour is ac-"tually exerted, and accompanies the me-"morials of his death! He that gave "himſelf for thee on the croſs, and gives "himſelf to thee in the *Sacrament* of the "*Supper*, can withhold nothing from thee!" Does not the very time ſeem to juſtify our expectation.

expectation of partaking in *the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, *the love of God*, and *the fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt?* What time ſo proper to receive the manifeſtations of theſe, if we put ourſelves in a readineſs for them, as when we are receiving the pledges of them, and renewing that covenant in which they are promis'd? Having *receiv'd gifts for men*, when will our King beſtow them, if not *at his own table?* — This concludes *the fifth head*, viz. *the death of Chriſt may be conſider'd as that of our ſacrifice.*

SECT. VII.

6thly, OUR *redeemer died as a conqueror.* So it is expreſly ſaid, that [a] *through death he deſtroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and delivered them who through fear of death were all their life-time ſubject to bondage.* The wiſdom of God is remarkably ſeen in defeating the malice of wicked men, and apoſtate ſpirits, by thoſe very means which they make uſe of to bring their evil devices to paſs. How great was *Satan*'s triumph, when, having put it into the heart of *Judas* to betray Chriſt, and puſh'd on the *Jews* and *Romans* to crucify him, he ſaw the dreadful deed accom-

[a] Heb ii. 14, 15.

accompliſh'd? little thinking, that what he ſo rejoic'd at would prove the moſt dangerous blow to his empire that he ever receiv'd. Chriſt had overcome the devil in the wilderneſs; on the croſs, his victory over him is render'd more complete; by the influence of his death to deſtroy ſin, and to aboliſh death, the effect of ſin. By the ſame act that *Sampſon* brought death upon himſelf, he involv'd great numbers of the enemies of God in the ſame common deſtruction; but, ſtrictly ſpeaking, it was not *Sampſon*'s death that was fatal to the *Philiſtines*, but the laſt act of his life: whereas, in the preſent caſe, death itſelf was the way of victory. There have been inſtances of thoſe who have conquer'd *at death*, and, having beaten their enemies, have then died well pleas'd. Lo! here is one who conquers *by dying*; not a common enemy, but the univerſal and the laſt enemy of mankind, *even death itſelf*. He was born that he might die, and he died to riſe again. *Our Saviour's deſtroying him that had the power of death*, is beſt explain'd by his [b] *aboliſhing death*; the ſame word being us'd in both places, tho' differently tranſlated. [c] *It is appointed to all men once to die*; but then Chriſt died that he might deſtroy, or *make void*, that death which [d] *paſſeth upon all men*, by obtaining a reſurrection for all, and

[b] 2 Tim. i. 10. [c] Heb. ix. 27. [d] Rom. v. 12.

and for all that do good a reſurrection to eternal life and happineſs: and, by making void all that *death* had been doing for ſo many thouſand years, he fruſtrates, or makes void, the deſign of that *wicked ſpirit* through whoſe temptations man firſt loſt immortality, and by whom, as a ſort of conqueror, the human race are held in bondage to the fear of death and the grave. Chriſt *the ſecond Adam*, or head of our race, dying without having deſerv'd death, and dying in our ſtead, recovers that immortality which the *firſt Adam* by his ſin had forfeited for himſelf and poſterity. Under this notion then, let us think of *our dying Lord*, when we ſhew forth his death in the *Sacrament* of the *Supper*: let us think of him as *vanquiſhing*, not as *vanquiſh'd*: let his *death* be conſider'd by us as the *purchaſe* of our immortality, and his *reſurrection*, which, in this caſe, we ought not to ſeparate from his death, being ſo nearly and ſo neceſſarily connected with it, as *the pledge* and *aſſurance* of it: by this means we ſhall find refuge in the meditations of Chriſt's death, eſpecially at his *Table*, againſt the fears of our own. "Why "ſhould I fear to die? why fear to paſs "into the ſtate of the dead? hath not my "Saviour taſted of the ſame bitter cup? "and was not his death ſoon followed by "his reſurrection? in like manner, tho' I "die, I ſhall live again, becauſe Chriſt "liveth:

" liveth: the interval indeed is like to be
" much longer between my death and my
" reſurrection; but what of that, ſince the
" ſouls of the faithful immediately go to
" be where Chriſt is, and I have the ſame
" certainty that I ſhall riſe in the laſt day,
" as that my redeemer is already riſen?
" and that I ſhall riſe to dwell with Chriſt
" for ever, as that I live and die to him
" now? For this reaſon, while I am com-
" memorating the death of my Redeemer,
" I will take the occaſion to celebrate his
" conqueſt over death; and to comfort
" myſelf with the proſpect of that univer-
" ſal triumph of all his members over it,
" which is reſerv'd to complete and crown
" the ſolemnities of the laſt day. [e] *O death,*
" *where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy*
" *victory? The ſting of death is ſin, and the*
" *ſtrength of ſin is the law, but thanks be to*
" *God who giveth us the victory through Jeſus*
" *Chriſt our Lord.*"

7thly, We may conſider the death of Chriſt as the ground of his exaltation. [f] For becauſe *he humbled himſelf, and became obedient to death, even the death of the croſs, therefore alſo hath God highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

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[e] 1 Cor. xv. 55—57. [f] Phil. ii. 8—11.

The whole world is ſubject to his authority, and all that can are to acknowledge it, by a voluntary ſubjection of themſelves to it. In another place, God himſelf is brought in ſaying to his Son, [g] *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a ſcepter of righteouſneſs is the ſcepter of thy kingdom. Thou haſt loved righteouſneſs and hated iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows*; advanc'd thee far above all thoſe who, like thee, partake of the royal ſtate and dignity. From theſe two places compar'd together we learn that what was ſo highly pleaſing to God in the death of his Son, and that for which he hath exalted him to his own right hand, inveſting him with all power both in heaven and in earth, is the obedience and ſubmiſſion to the will of God which he manifeſted therein; his love of holineſs and zeal for the advancement of it, which was the great motive to his undertaking the office of mediator between God and man, and diſcovers itſelf throughout the execution of it. From the humiliation of Chriſt the Son of God, which is the firſt ſcene that opens to us when we are participating in the memorials of his death, let us paſs, in our thoughts to his exaltation which ſoon followed. *He firſt ſuffer'd, and then enter'd into glory.* From hence I am inſtructed by what method I may gain the divine favour, and advance

[g] Heb. i. 8, 9.

advance myſelf in it; not by praiſing his filial obedience, and reſignation under ſufferings, while I indulge to a fretful and repining temper myſelf; not by truſting to his righteouſneſs when I am without the love of righteouſneſs in my own heart, and a ſtranger to the practice of it in my life. I cannot think, if I think ſoberly, that I can riſe by any other way than that in which the Son of God did; that tho' I do not imitate him in his hatred of iniquity, yet for his ſake who hated it, and becauſe he hated it, God will beſtow the ſame marks of his favour upon me as on thoſe that are moſt like him; and that a part of that glory which he receiv'd as the reward of his holineſs and obedience ſhall deſcend on me who have nothing to produce of either; not even the loweſt degree of goſpel-ſincerity. Let this convince me of the neceſſity of holineſs that I may pleaſe God, and animate me to endeavour after the higheſt meaſures of it, ſince in the ſame degree as I approach my Saviour in holineſs now, I ſhall approach him in happineſs and glory hereafter. Once more.

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

8thly, *THE death of Chriſt may be conſider'd in the relation it bears to his ſecond appearance.* For as often as we eat this his *bread*, and drink this his *cup*, we do ſhew his death, *till he come.* Come he will then, and till he does come, his church on earth is never to ceaſe ſhewing forth his death. [a] As *he was once offered to bear the ſins of many*, ſo *unto them that look for him ſhall he appear the ſecond time, without ſin* (*i. e.* an offering for ſin) *unto ſalvation.* He then came to purchaſe ſalvation, now to confer it. Theſe two, *viz.* the *firſt* and *ſecond* coming of Chriſt, how great ſoever the diſtance of time may be between the one and the other, ought to be join'd in the chriſtian's view, as they are mention'd together in the paſſage juſt now cited; *as often as ye eat this bread*, &c. We believe that Chriſt died, and to publiſh this belief we ſhew his death in this ordinance: but we believe alſo that he roſe again from the dead, that he aſcended up far above all heavens, and that from thence he ſhall deſcend in the ſame manner as his diſciples ſaw him go into heaven; and, in teſtimony of this our belief, we ſhew his death *till he come.* This ordinance

[a] Heb. ix. 28.

ordinance hath a double aſpect in one; it does at the ſame time look backward and forward, being a thankful commemoration of the meritorious tho' accurſed death which our Saviour ſuffer'd when he firſt came into the world, by virtue of which commemoration it becomes a joyful pledge of his ſecond glorious advent; and as ſuch he left it to his church, which is never to part with the pledge till the perſon himſelf comes to redeem it by his preſence. An appearance this is which every lover of Chriſt ſhould rejoice to think on, ready to cry out in the extaſies of his paſſion, "*Come, Lord Jeſus,* "*come quickly!* In this myſtery, I ſee thee "darkly as through a glaſs: O when ſhall "I behold thee face to face! When will "*the ſun of righteouſneſs* break through all "interpoſing veils, that theſe ſhadows may "be done away, and his ſpouſe the church "have the pleaſure of ſeeing him in all "his glory! Sweet are the approaches he "now makes to our ſouls; theſe diſtant "and cloudy views are a mighty refreſh-"ment; how much will the pleaſure be "encreas'd when I ſhall be [b] *abſent from the* "*body and preſent with the Lord!* Above all, "when I ſhall put on my glorified body, "and, with the many thouſands, and thou-"ſand times ten thouſand of his ſaints that "have ever liv'd upon earth, ſhall [c] *aſcend* "*to meet him in the air*, be publickly ab-"ſolv'd

[b] 2 Cor. v. 8. [c] 1 Theſſ. iv. 17.

" ſolv'd and acknowledg'd by him, and " by him preſented holy and without blame " to God even our Father; ſee him ar- " ray'd in majeſty and love, and fall wor- " ſhipping at his feet! Lord, what will " our tranſports be!" Did this ſacred action only lead us back to the death of Chriſt, and ſignify no more, it would be but a heartleſs and a melancholy entertainment; we ſhould ſit penſive at his *Table*, and have no objects before us, but ſuch as were fitted to feed our ſorrow: but, bleſſed be God, from the death of Chriſt it carries our view to the concluding day of the world, when he ſhall be reveal'd in the the glory of the Father, and of his holy angels; and thine eyes, O chriſtian, ſhall behold him, thine, and not another's! Thy Saviour died, but he is not periſh'd; he ever liveth to govern the world, and intercede for his church: he is gone, but not with a deſign never more to return! And needs muſt this be a pleaſing meditation to one whoſe ſoul is continually reaching out after his Redeemer. The faithful *Iſraelite* was characteriz'd by his earneſt expectation of the *firſt coming of the Meſſiah*; the *true chriſtian* is known by the belief and hope of the *ſecond* coming of his Lord, and his care to prepare for it. The ſacrifices under the law prefigur'd Chriſt's oblation of himſelf on the croſs; but that the *Jews* had a diſtinct notion of this figurative meaning of

their

their ſacrifices, and thereby had their faith ſupported and aſſiſted in regard of that ſacrifice which was to be offer'd in the fulneſs of time, is not ſo certain; whereas the *chriſtian* hath in his hands the memorials of that precious death, as a kind of ſecurity of his coming again under a more godlike form. The firſt appearance of Chriſt put an end to the figures of the *law*; his ſecond will aboliſh the ceremonial ordinances of the *goſpel:* and gladly will the church make this exchange of faith for viſion, of the ſhadow for the ſubſtance, of the ſign for the thing ſignified. For tho' the faithful love this ordinance much, they love Jeſus himſelf more, for whoſe ſake alone they love this inſtitution. [d] *Him having not ſeen they love, and in him, though now they ſee him not, believing they rejoice with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory.* " And is it ſo, that " I love the appearance of Chriſt, and am " perſuaded that all thoſe things that are " ſaid concerning the awful circumſtances " of that appearance, and the important " and everlaſting conſequences of it ſhall " certainly come to paſs? Lord, what " manner of perſon then ought I to be in " all holy converſation and godlineſs! Is it " one end of my partaking of the *Lord's-* " *Supper* to declare my belief of Chriſt's " coming again to judge the world, and to " be glorified in his ſaints? and ought " not

[d] 1 Pet. i. 8.

" not this to mind me of another thing
" which I ſhould propoſe by it, even the
" making more ready for his coming, and
" behaving with a conſtant regard to that
" great day, that ſo I may be able to give
" up my account with joy? Let me watch,
" becauſe I know not the hour when our
" Lord ſhall come: and let me never for-
" get, that ſuch as I am at the time of my
" death I ſhall be found in judgment; and
" that my death is like to be conformable
" to my life."

REFLECTIONS.

THIS diſcourſe will naturally lead us to make the few following reflections.

SECT. I.

1. THE main uſe, and (with ſome reſtriction, we may ſay) the ultimate deſign of the *Lord's-Supper* is the promoting of the life of God in the ſoul, and the practice of univerſal righteouſneſs and goodneſs; the nobleſt end that can be accompliſh'd in us, being inſeparably connected with the glory of God, and our

own final felicity. And, perhaps, no one ordinance advances this end ſo viſibly and effectually as this does; not only as we are hereby put in remembrance of our duty, and diſcern the manifold obligations to it, and do more directly and ſtrongly engage to walk circumſpectly, holy, and unblameably; but alſo, and principally, as the motives to a holy and chriſtian life drawn from the allurements of example, the ties of gratitude, the almoſt irreſiſtible force of love, from the moſt amiable and encouraging repreſentations of the deity, the moſt inviting proſpects of another world, the glorious rewards of piety beyond the grave; and finally, from the worthleſſneſs and inſignificancy of all thoſe things which are the uſual incentives to corrupt affections, and temptations to ſinful actions, are all compriz'd, and, as it were, cloſely crowded together in this one inſtitution. What one thing is wanting to exerciſe the ſpirit of devotion, or to increaſe it? to actuate every virtue and grace, or to engage us to grow and improve in it? 'Tis a ſort of *ſummary* of all the helps and encouragements which God hath vouchſafed us in the way to heaven. So that whoever does not take it in this view, but reſts in the *preſent action*, as having I know not what kind of *charm* and efficacy to do us a great deal of good, without making us a whit better, hath certainly a very wrong notion of it. Nor

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can chriſtians be too often warn'd againſt ſplitting on this rock, which hath been fatal to ſo many. The *Lord's-Supper* is a venerable inſtitution; but, after all, is no more than *an inſtrumental duty*, and ſo not to be compar'd with the inward power of chriſtianity, and the ſubſtantial virtues of a good life: theſe are of indiſpenſible neceſſity, and eternal excellence; whereas all the external parts and offices of religion are of more or leſs value according to their greater or leſs ſubſerviency, *as means* accompanied with the influences of divine grace to promote theſe ends: and conſequently, where theſe ends are not in any degree anſwer'd by them, all the eſteem we profeſs for them, and all the attendance we give them, is in the ſight of God of no weight and value at all.

2. By the ſame rule the character of the perſon who hath *a right* to come to the *Lord's-Table*, and who therefore ought to accept of the invitation to come, will be eaſily ſettled. He that hath in ſome good meaſure already attain'd to that temper of mind, and leads that kind of life which this ordinance was intended, and is ſo remarkably fitted, to carry on and perfect, hath the qualifications of a worthy communicant. He hath *faith*, and *hope*, and *charity*, is humble and penitent, loves his Saviour more than all, makes conſcience of every known duty, and flees every known

ſin; and having *the thing itſelf*, which we call *religion*, cannot want a competent *knowledge* of it, which he will endeavour to render more clear and comprehenſive: he may be very imperfect in all theſe reſpects, but will he therefore abſtain from the *Lord's-Supper*, when by devoutly attending upon that inſtitution he may reaſonably hope to be aſſiſted in going on to perfection? his very ſenſe of his imperfections, as long as he does not allow himſelf in them, is *a good ſign*, and ought at once to encourage him, and to make him willing to accept of all the helps and directions he can get in order to his gaining greater heights. When he is aſk'd, why he does not come to the *Holy Communion*, can he appeal to his own heart, that if he thought it his duty, all circumſtances conſider'd, he would not upon any account whatever ſtay away? how eaſily may this be turn'd upon him, and made uſe of to convince him, to his own great comfort, of the very thing he doubts of, *viz.* his *right*, and conſequently his *obligation* to communicate? would he rejoice to come if all hindrances were remov'd? then 'tis plain, he loves the duty: he gladly would communicate if he thought he might, and endeavours to get all the ſatisfaction he can in the matter; that is, he diſcharges his duty in other inſtances, and would do ſo in this, but that he fears his ſin would be greater in coming than it is in ſtaying away.

And

And is not this a proof of *that good conſcience* which, if any thing can do it, muſt entitle a man to this privilege? But, perhaps, there are thoſe who fancy ſomething more is neceſſary than *ſincerity*; or that the danger is ſo exceeding great of communicating upon a miſtaken ſuppoſition of our having a *right* when we have none, that nothing but a certainty of our having that *right* will juſtify us in running ſuch a dreadful hazard. As to the former, if *ſincerity*, and not any particular eminent degrees of holineſs be the *condition* of *ſalvation*, there can be no good ground, ſurely, to imagine that ſome *farther condition* is neceſſary to qualify us for *commemorating our Saviour*: if the latter be their fear, and this their fear be well-grounded, how very few, that had well-conſider'd the thing, would venture to receive, when the number is probably ſo ſmall of thoſe who can be ſaid to be *certain* of their integrity? but let us not frighten ourſelves where there is no need. If we ſhould come to the *Lord's-Supper*, not being, ſtrictly ſpeaking, meet to partake of it, there is nothing in this action, being done upon a miſtake, but we may very well ſuppoſe God will overlook and pardon, as long as we come out of conſcience, and with a pious deſign, and, if we are yet ſhort of a chriſtian ſtature, are endeavouring every day to come up to it: nor is there any thing in the nature of the inſti-

tution itſelf that ſhould give us theſe terrible apprehenſions of it: for let us ſuppoſe that we had nothing relating to this matter in ſcripture but the account which the *Evangeliſts* have deliver'd to us of the inſtitution, *viz.* [e] That *Jeſus took bread and bleſſed it, and brake it, and gave it to the diſciples, and ſaid, take eat, this is my body; and that he took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, ſaying, drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the New Teſtament which is ſhed for many for the remiſſion of ſins*; and that, at the concluſion of this holy feaſt, *having ſung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.* Is there any thing in the words of the inſtitution, or in the circumſtances of that *firſt Supper*, that ſhould deter any chriſtian of a ſober converſation from doing as he is here commanded? on the contrary, is there not every thing to invite, and in a manner force his compliance; *the nature of the action*, being nothing elſe but a *feſtival Supper*, of a religious kind, the *condeſcending familiarity* of the Maſter with his diſciples, and *the deſign* of it to keep up the memory of their friend and benefactor? and may we not therefore ſafely conclude, that nothing we meet with in any other part of ſcripture can be inconſiſtent with the incouragement which every upright ſoul may draw from the *original inſtitution*; unleſs there is ſome particular reaſon added for it? But now tha

[e] Mat. xxvi. 26—30.

that paſſage in *St.* Paul's *firſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians* (which is the place that hath given birth to ſo many groundleſs ſcruples and terrors, or at leaſt hath been made uſe of to feed them) hath nothing of that nature: it contains a reproof of ſome in that church for their receiving the *Lord's-Supper* in ſo ſcandalous, ſo irreverent and ſo diſorderly a manner, that they might very well be ſaid *not to diſcern the Lord's body*; not obſerving that decorum and ſobriety at the *Lord's-Table*, which all chriſtians ought to do at their common meals; and much leſs making *a due diſtinction* between that ſacred repaſt, and their uſual ones. Who could have ſaid leſs on this occaſion than the *Apoſtle* does? or who not think that a like irreverence would unfit us for the ordinary worſhip of God? notwithſtanding which, we do not reckon ourſelves excus'd from coming to the houſe of God, but only oblig'd to behave with greater reverence when we are there. 'Tis true, the *Apoſtle* ſays, that [f] *he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lord's body*: but let the *Apoſtle* himſelf explain what he means by *eating and drinking unworthily*, and what by that *damnation* that is hereby incurr'd. The irregularities of the *Corinthian* church which occaſioned this part of the *Apoſtle*'s letter to them will explain the former, and what

[f] 1 Cor. xi. 29.

what they ſuffer'd upon this account the latter; *for this cauſe* (as it follows in the very next verſe) [g] *many among you are weak and ſickly, and many ſleep*, or die; ſo that bodily diſorders, ſickneſs and death, were that *judgment* (for ſo the word ſignifies) which ſuch unworthy receivers eat and drank to themſelves; not *damnation*, as we commonly underſtand it, of future and everlaſting puniſhment, as is plain to a demonſtration from what the *Apoſtle* himſelf ſaith, that they were thus [h] *judg'd* or *chaſten'd of the Lord*, that they *might not be condemn'd with the world*. And this will help to clear the other expreſſion *(ver.* 27.) of their being *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*; it ſignifies their ſhewing ſuch a diſreſpect to the *ſacrament* of Chriſt's *body* and *blood*, as would expoſe them to the tokens of God's diſpleaſure here mention'd. I ſhall only add, that this inſtance of *ſeverity* was no more than neceſſary, in the beginning of chriſtianity, to beget in the minds of men a proper reverence for the inſtitutions of the goſpel; and is agreeable to the method ordinarily obſerv'd both by God and men in making examples of thoſe who are guilty of the firſt acts of contempt and diſobedience againſt their laws and conſtitutions. Thus concerning the man that was found gathering ſticks on *the Sabbath-Day*, God thus makes known his pleaſure, [i] *He ſhall ſurely*

[g] 1 Cor. xi. 30 [h] Ver. 32. [i] Numb. xv. 35.

ſurely be put to death, all the congregation ſhall ſtone him with ſtones without the camp. Thus *Annanias* and *Sapphira* his wife, for bringing part of the price of the poſſeſſion which they had ſold, as if it had been the whole (which is called [k] *lying to the Holy Ghoſt*) are both of them ſtruck dead upon the ſpot. This inſtance of *ſeverity*, added to that other beforemention'd of the infliction of diſeaſes and death upon ſeveral members of the *Corinthian church*, may ſeem not very well to ſuit with the nature of the *goſpel law*, which is *a law of love*; yet when it is conſider'd that this was in order to ſecure the greater veneration to the chriſtian religion, then in its infancy, and to convince the world that as it came from God, ſo it was under his peculiar regard and protection, we ſhall no longer wonder at the reaſon of it.

SECT. II.

3. WE may from hence ſatisfy ourſelves as to the *preparation* neceſſary to every particular communion. Am I called to ſhew forth the death of Chriſt? and am I in a ſtate and diſpoſition of mind for this ſacred action? have I clean hands, and

[k] Acts v.

and a pure heart? am I under no ſuch diſorders either of body or mind as would incapacitate me for attending upon this ordinance without diſtraction, and receiving advantage by it? why then ſhould I baniſh myſelf from it? it may be I have not been able to ſpend the uſual time in the exerciſes of devotion preparatory thereto; but ſince this hath been through no fault of my own, not out of *choice* but *neceſſity*, and I think myſelf, notwithſtanding, in a tolerable degree diſpos'd for the ordinary worſhip of the *Lord's-Day*, ſo as to be able to compoſe my thoughts, and raiſe my affections towards heavenly things, why ſhould I imagine myſelf forbidden to approach the *Lord's-Table?* is much more time neceſſary to empty my heart of worldly thoughts and cares than I am maſter of? if ſo, I have reaſon to fear that I love the world abundantly too well, or am too much involv'd in the buſineſs of it; and ſhall therefore do better to ſet myſelf to remove the cauſe of my complaints, I mean that inordinate affection to the world which makes it ſo difficult for me to get leave to go aſide and converſe with God, than letting this alone to be oblig'd to have recourſe to certain extraordinary acts of meditation, prayer and humiliation, at the approach of every communion, and to lay the main ſtreſs of *my preparation* at leaſt, if not of *my religion*, upon theſe. If this, neither, be the cauſe of

of mens thinking ſuch a particular portion of time employ'd in devotional exerciſes abſolutely neceſſary to their preparation, let them enquire whether there be not ſomething of ſuperſtition in it; which is a thing that will not add either to the *comfort* or the *credit* of their religion. Does not our fear of God himſelf degenerate into ſuperſtition when it breeds a ſervility of ſpirit, and perpetual diſquietudes, making us apprehend his diſpleaſure for things which we do not ſee any intrinſick evil in, and don't know that he hath forbidden? In like manner, is not our regard to any ordinance ſuperſtitious, when we are afraid to attend upon that ordinance becauſe we have not had time to do more by way of preparation for it than is any where requir'd of us? for where is it ſaid that we muſt ſpend ſo much time in preparation for the *Lord's-Supper*, or not come to it? Methinks, I would not have ſincere and devout ſouls fetter *the free ſpirit* of religion with unneceſſary and even prejudicial rules, and lay burthens and limitations on themſelves which God hath not laid upon them: as long as they guard againſt extremes, I am far from diſſuading or diſcouraging their indulging to their pious inclinations. On the contrary, I ſhall take leave to offer them a word or two of advice, as to the manner of employing their time when they have it, that they may come to this *Holy Feſtival* with the

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greateſt compoſure and elevation of ſoul they poſſibly can.

Let them *examine* whether as to the habitual temper of their minds, and the general tenor and flow of their lives, they go backward or forward in their religion. Let them be thankful for any victories they have been enabled by the grace of God to gain over themſelves and the world, and for any progreſs they have made in the chriſtian life; and at the ſame time humble themſelves before God for any defects which upon enquiry appear to them; that their conformity to the example and precepts of Jeſus is no greater, and that they are not more ſteadily and powerfully influenc'd by his love. Let the grace of God that hath wrought effectually in them, notwithſtanding all their infirmities, animate them to go on chearfully the reſt of their way; and by the inſtances wherein they have been wanting in the improvement of this grace, let them be taught to be more watchful, circumſpect, and abounding in good works for the future. Let them reflect whether there be not ſome particular part of their conduct which does not ſo well ſuit with the rules of their chriſtian profeſſion, nor match ſo agreeably with other parts of their character; whether there be any liberties or indulgences which, tho' innocent in themſelves, yet becauſe of their having prov'd ſnares and temptations to them, they ought not

to have allow'd themſelves in; any gift or grace that needs to be ſtir'd up; and let them ſtrive to come behind in no one thing whereby they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.

As to *meditation*, let them eſpecially make choice of thoſe things for the entertainment of their minds, which have the moſt apparent tendency to weaken their engagements with the preſent world, and to ſtrengthen the union of their hearts to God and Jeſus, thoſe transforming objects; to enlighten them with juſter notions of the nature of true religion and godlineſs, and to ſhew them the neceſſity, the beauty, and the advantages of it; that ſo all the ſprings and principles of activity in the chriſtian life may, as much as poſſible, be reduc'd to this one of *holy love and delight*; or at leaſt may not interfere with it: ſuch things as will warm their hearts with ſentiments of zeal and gratitude, render ſin more hateful and deteſtable in their eyes, and quicken their deſires after the perfection of the heavenly world. Meditations of this kind would have the happieſt effect upon them to awaken their *drowſy*, or to cheer and enliven their *drooping* minds, and by that means would make them approach the *Lord's-Table* with equal care and ſatisfaction.

For the ſake of ſome let me add, by way of caution, that in our preparations for the

Sacrament there is need of prudence, that while we are afraid of taking too little time, we do not impoſe taſks upon ourſelves beyond our ſtrength, and tire and exhauſt thoſe ſpirits which we ſhould only exerciſe; the conſequence of which will be that we ſhall have no life and vigour left when we come to the *Lord's-Table*, and ſo be ready to impute to our *indevotion* what is really the effect of our *indiſcretion*. Having made us *men*, creatures compos'd of fleſh and ſpirit, God requires not of us the ſame flame and intention of devotion as from *angels*, but *conſidereth our frame, and remembreth that we are but duſt*; which is reaſon enough why we ourſelves ſhould do it.

4. We may from hence too form a judgment of *worthy receiving*, as well as of the *worthy receiver*. As he is the moſt *worthy receiver* who hath moſt of *Jeſus* in him, of his *mind*, his *image*, his *ſpirit*; ſo that is the moſt *worthy manner of receiving* that flows from theſe principles. It does not conſiſt in rapturous flights of the imagination, and ſtrong workings of the paſſions, which have their foundation in the natural conſtitution more than in a clear diſcernment of the ſpiritual meaning and intent of the ordinance, and a lively ſenſe of the great benefits reſulting from it. When I have Jeſus Chriſt evidently ſet forth as crucified before my eyes, am I mov'd with the thought of it after much the ſame manner

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as I am at the recital of a ſad ſtory, and does the impreſſion wear away like that of *a tail that is told?* however I may flatter myſelf, theſe are not ſo much the operations of *grace* as of *nature*. The chriſtian that is aſſiſted by this ordinance to ſee the great evil of ſin, and the love of Jeſus in delivering from it, and to perceive the many forcible motives and engagements to all holineſs of converſation that he here meets with, ſo as to be more in love with his duty (by which only he can know that he loves his Saviour more) to have his pious reſolutions more eſtabliſh'd, the tenderneſs and ſenſibility of his conſcience encreas'd, and to be brought more under the influence of the doctrines and precepts of chriſtianity in all his actions; this is he who receives moſt worthily, whether he hath, or hath not, the happineſs of warm and melting affections; for we are not to make an eſtimate of ourſelves by theſe, but by other marks: theſe, 'tis true, are very deſirable things, and to be ſought after, tho' not in the firſt place; but then they are not neceſſary in *all*, and perhaps in *none* at all times; and they may deceive us, not being join'd with the things now mention'd; whereas theſe latter are of ſuch a nature, that in caſe we find them in ourſelves, we cannot be miſtaken in arguing from them to our own advantage.

In regard to the *thoughts* and *meditations* that are moſt proper at the *Lord's-Table*,

ſome help and direction may be had from what hath been offer'd in the preceding diſcourſe * ; and ſtill more from the *Holy Scripture* ; provided in the courſe of our reading we remark ſuch paſſages, and endeavour to imprint them on our minds and memories, as will very naturally bear to be applied to the *Sacrament* of the *Supper*, and be of uſe to feed the flame of devotion while we are partaking of it.

5. There ſeems to be no great occaſion for any diſtinct rules concerning our behaviour *after the holy Communion*. For what ſhould our behaviour be afterwards but the ſame as it ought to be before and at all other times, that is, uniformly holy and good ? A fancy that we are oblig'd to greater ſtrictneſs the next day, or following week, after a *Sacrament*, than we are when it hath been longer paſt may be of ill conſequence ; and will certainly be ſo, if we think the more ſtrict we are before and after a *Sacrament*, the leſs care of our behaviour we are oblig'd to in the time between. A life of chriſtian piety, being the end deſign'd to be promoted by every duty of divine worſhip, particularly by the *Lord's-Supper*, is what we are to be concerned for, and not to truſt to occaſional heats and ſtarts in religion.

6. We

* *The Devotional Exerciſes were not in the firſt edition of this diſcourſe.*

6. We here ſee the advantage of *frequent communions*; and the anſwer to the common objection againſt them. The *advantage* is, that theſe frequent communions tend to promote our progreſs in the chriſtian life; the *objection* againſt them, that communions, if frequent, will loſe their *ſolemnity*. But I very much doubt that in this caſe people deceive themſelves with a wrong notion of *ſolemnity*. Do they mean that they ſhall not come with that unaccountable awe and dread upon their minds? and what if they do not, as long as they are ſerious and devout? We ſhould think it very odd reaſoning, ſhould we hear men take up a reſolution not to worſhip God all the week long in their families or cloſets, to the end the duties of God's worſhip may be the more ſolemn, when perform'd in his own houſe, and on his own day. And yet the caſes are not altogether unlike. An habitual ſeriouſneſs and fervor of ſpirit is undoubtedly, in the nature of things, to be expected from the frequent returns of holy duties, and not from long intermiſſions of them; and the more habitually ſerious we are, ſo much the better, and in ſo much the better preparation ſhall we be to wait upon God in every ordinance. Let us not therefore of choice take up with very rare communions; or, where circumſtances will admit of it, be againſt having them more frequently. If we communicate ſeldom becauſe we cannot

communicate oftener, we muſt be contented, and do as well as we can; but by no means be the better pleas'd with our ſituation in this reſpect, and think we have more reverence for the *Lord's-Supper* than ſome have, for no other reaſon than that we do not come to it ſo often. In a word, let us ſtudy how to make this and every duty of religion profitable to the building us up in holineſs and comfort, through faith unto ſalvation.

A.

TREATISE,

ON THE

OBLIGATION

OF

The PROFESSORS OF CHRISTIANITY to celebrate the LORD'S-SUPPER,

WITH

An ANSWER to the PRINCIPAL EXCUSES for neglecting it.

Of the OBLIGATION *of* Chriſtians *to celebrate the* LORD'S-SUPPER.

HAVING in another treatiſe explain'd the *nature* and *deſign* of the *Lord's-Supper*, becauſe, notwithſtanding the apparent excellency and obligation of this inſtitution of our Saviour, too many, by profeſſion chriſtians, indulge themſelves in the neglect of it; I ſhall diſtinctly conſider the *obligation* lying upon the diſciples of Chriſt to communicate in the *Sacrament* of the *Lord's-Supper*, and ſome of the *principal reaſons* which hinder the moſt from complying with this *obligation*.

That you may clearly apprehend the *obligation* lying upon the diſciples of Chriſt to communicate in the *Sacrament* of the *Lord's-Supper*, I would offer the following conſiderations to your ſerious and moſt impartial thoughts.

1. Conſider the *expreſſneſs* of the *command*. Can any words be more plain and direct than thoſe which we meet with in the account given of this *inſtitution* by the *Evan-*

Evangeliſt [a] *Luke? This do in remembrance of me.* There might have been a little more room to queſtion whether this was not a temporary command, a command to continue in force only while the *Apoſtles* liv'd, there being none preſent but the *Apoſtles* when this *Sacrament* was inſtituted, if the very reaſon or ground of the *command* did not ſhow the contrary. The bread and wine in the *Sacrament* ſignify the *body and blood of Chriſt*, his *body broken*, and his *blood ſhed for the remiſſion of ſins*; and unleſs any one will ſay, that we have not the ſame concern in the death of Chriſt, and the atonement for ſin made by it as the *firſt chriſtians*, the argument from hence will I think be unanſwerable: that the ſacrifice of Chriſt being intended alike for the benefit of all ages, and the covenant of grace thereby confirmed extending to all, the inſtitution of the *Supper*, which was deſigned to lead the thoughts and meditations of chriſtians to this ſacrifice, muſt equally regard *all*; eſpecially if we add the words juſt mentioned, that the *Apoſtles* were to do this *in remembrance of Chriſt*, i. e. after he was gone from them, they were to repeat this action in order to keep up the remembrance of him in the world, and to preſerve it freſh in themſelves. 'Tis evident at firſt ſight that the celebrating his memory among his diſciples is in general hereby

[a] Luke xxii. 19.

by intended. And is not the conſequence viſible, that if the followers of Chriſt in all ages of the world are bound to honour the memory of their Saviour, and as much need the aſſiſtance of an outward rite to this purpoſe, as Chriſt's immediate diſciples did, then this precept muſt include the one as well as the other? yea more eſpecially thoſe who came after, ſince they muſt be more in danger of forgetting their maſter than his *firſt* diſciples were, who perſonally knew him, or convers'd with thoſe that did; and were continually talking about the wonders of his life and death, and reſurrection and aſcenſion, which were then freſh tranſactions? *they* might better ſure diſpenſe with an ordinance dedicated to the memory of Chriſt, who never almoſt ſuffer'd him to be out of their minds or mouths, than *following ages*; to whom therefore this *command* appears to belong from the very reaſon of it ſubjoined, *viz.* that it was to be in *remembrance* of Chriſt. And that there might not be the leaſt reaſonable doubt left about the perpetuity of this ordinance, the Apoſtle [b] *Paul* tells the *Corinthians* (and in them the Chriſtians of ſucceeding times) *That as often as they eat this bread, and drank this cup, they did ſhew the Lord's death till he came*; an expreſſion which would have been exceeding improper, if the inſtitution was to have an end

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[b] 1 Cor. xi. 26.

ſo ſoon after it began. How could the diſciples of Chriſt be ſaid to ſhow or repreſent his death in this ordinance *till his coming*, if thoſe only of the *firſt age* were to ſhow it forth after this manner? do not the words manifeſtly imply, that as Chriſt would always have a church upon earth, ſo it would be the duty of the members of it, one generation after another, to commemorate the death of their maſter, till he *ſhould appear the ſecond time and receive them to himſelf*, when there would be no occaſion to do it? The *command* therefore I apprehend, as taking in all ages, is undeniable, and conſequently the *obligation* upon all to obſerve it: for I hope there are none ſo abſurd, as while they profeſs to believe the *truth* of the goſpel, to deny their being bound by the *commands* of it. If the goſpel be true, then every precept it contains is from God, has the ſtamp of his authority, and is the reſult of his infinite wiſdom; and if ſo, what other meaning can *voluntary* diſobedience to any command bear but this, that the diſobedient perſon regards not the authority of the moſt high God, and queſtions the wiſdom of his precepts? for had he that awe of the divine authority, and that perſuaſion of the divine wiſdom in any command or inſtitution, which ſhould and does poſſeſs every pious breaſt, he would not *knowingly* and *wilfully* refuſe his compliance with

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any one injunction of the goſpel: and indeed he might as conſiſtently withold his obedience from one command as another, and from all as do it avowedly from any one; according to the reaſoning of the Apoſtle [c] *James, that he who keepeth the whole law*, and *offends in one point*, i. e. *voluntarily* and *habitually*, *is guilty of all*; guilty of preſumptuouſly diſowning that authority which ſupports all the reſt. This is the language of wilfully neglecting any command of God, which holds of the *Lord's-Supper*, as well as of other commands of the goſpel. Wilful diſobedience here as in all other caſes admits of no excuſe, amounting to a practical denial of the authority and wiſdom of God in his laws. It nearly concerns the abſenters from the *Lord's-Table* to take this matter into their moſt ſerious conſideration. Are they perfectly negligent and thoughtleſs about receiving the *Lord's-Supper?* do they go on one year after another without troubling themſelves about it? never inquiring whether it be or be not a command of the goſpel, and whether it does or does not reach them, and even putting the thought from them when they have a ſuſpicion it does? have they no ſolicitude at all upon their ſpirits to approve themſelves unto God by walking in all his commandments blameleſs, deſirous to know their duty in its whole extent, and

[c] Jam. ii. 10.

to practiſe every part of it? for certain if this be not *wilful diſobedience*, 'tis a very near approach to it, and carries in it a great ſhare of the ſame guilt: nor can it I think be ſuppos'd of any ſincere chriſtian, that he ſhould pay ſo little reſpect to the commands of the goſpel as this; every ſuch perſon muſt be under a real concern to know his duty in every inſtance (particularly with regard to his communicating in the *Lord's-Supper*) and to diſcharge it when known: but though he takes ſome care, yet it may be not all that he ought, to clear up the matter to himſelf, and to diſengage himſelf from all hindrances, that he may not live in the neglect of that which is ſo expreſsly a command of Chriſt.

2. Conſider the *Perſon* who is the immediate author of this command, and in memory of whom it is appointed. This is no other than *Jeſus Chriſt our Lord and Saviour*, to whom we acknowledge ourſelves infinitely indebted, and would be thought to have the greateſt affection and regard. And certain it is, that we have the greateſt reaſon for this acknowledgement, inaſmuch as this moſt excellent Perſon has given us proofs of his kindneſs to us and concern for our happineſs, the moſt ſurpriſing that can be imagined. *Being* [d] *in the form of God, and having a glory with him before the world was, he did* for our ſakes *take on him the form of*

[d] Philip. ii. 6, &c. John xvii. 5.

of a ſervant; and being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf yet lower, and became obedient to death, even the death of the croſs: and to what end, but that he might expiate our ſins by his blood, and obtain eternal redemption for us? The principle of all that our bleſſed Saviour did and ſuffered upon earth, and tranſacts in heaven, is love to the ſinful children of men. [e] *They being partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf willingly took part of the ſame, that thro' death he might deſtroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who thro' fear of death were all their life-time ſubject to bondage. For verily he took not hold of the fallen angels* to reſtore them, but fallen men, *the ſeed of Abraham.* So that it muſt be owned, that never was love like that of our Saviour, as never ſorrow was like his. And love requires love, the love of the *Redeemer* the love of the *redeemed.* And there is no chriſtian but makes profeſſion of love to Chriſt, upon which let me beg you to reflect a little. Hath [f] *Chriſt* lov'd me and given himſelf for me? and do I really love him? then ſhall I be ready to do every thing that is neceſſary to evidence the ſincerity of my own love, and the ſenſe I have of the unexampled greatneſs of his; whatever is a proper and indiſpenſible teſt of theſe I ſhall joyfully comply with. And is not this the teſt which our Lord himſelf

[e] Heb. ii. 14, &c. [f] Gal. ii. 20.

has given his diſciples, [g] If *ye love me, keep my commandments?* among theſe commandments our ſhewing forth his death in the *Sacrament* of the *Supper* is one; to which therefore we are obliged as a teſtimony of our love to the perſon who lays this command upon us: and what adds very much to the obligation is, that this great friend of ours is not only the *author* of this inſtitution, but the *object* of it too; it has an immediate reference to him, was appointed in honour of him, and is conſecrated to his memory; and for the ſame reaſon then as we are bound to love Chriſt, and to have our hearts fill'd with ſentiments of gratitude to him, muſt we not be obliged to expreſs our love and gratitude by our love to his memory, and earneſt deſire to do him all the honour of which we are capable; wiſhing that we were able to do more, and could perſuade others to entertain the ſame affectionate ſentiments towards him, as we ourſelves have? muſt we not acknowledge that we are obliged to all this? and by conſequence, to put ourſelves in a condition to come without any more delay to the *Lord's-Table*, to which we have been ſo often invited? The deſign of this ordinance being to do honour to the Redeemer, and to perpetuate the memory of his virtues and of his dying love in the world; ſuch a deſign every lover of Chriſt muſt heartily ap-

[g] John xiv. 15.

approve, and think himſelf happy if he can be a means of accompliſhing it in any degree.

3. Conſider the *nature* and *properties* of this inſtitution. 'Tis the moſt diſtinguiſhing of all the precepts of the goſpel, exceeding plain and intelligible, eaſy to be performed, and greatly to our advantage. Let us briefly revolve theſe ſeveral things in our thoughts, and we ſhall be more ſenſible of the obligation we are under to do as our Saviour has commanded us.

1. 'Tis the *moſt diſtinguiſhing* command of the goſpel; I mean of any that relate to the ſtated ordinary duty of chriſtians. *Baptiſm* is indeed a peculiar inſtitution of the chriſtian religion; but then beſides that *Baptiſm* in regard to far the greateſt part of chriſtians is adminiſtred in infancy, and ſo is not their own act, we may obſerve that 'tis *once for all*, being an initiating ordinance, by which we are ſolemnly introduced into the church or fellowſhip of Chriſt, after which we are concern'd for no more, but to walk worthy of our dedication to the ſervice of God in this ordinance: *Baptiſm* is not to be repeated, whereas the *Lord's-Supper* is a ſtanding part of chriſtian worſhip, and a duty which the diſciples of Chriſt are to perform again and again, as they have opportunity; [h] *As often as ye eat this bread*: now I beſeech you ob-

[h] 1 Cor. xi. 26.

ſerve how the argument from hence proceeds. Here is a ſtated permanent duty of the chriſtian ſociety, and which at the ſame time is the moſt direct and viſible mark or badge of our being the diſciples of Chriſt: when we receive the *Lord's-Supper* every communicant takes of the ſacramental bread and wine, and by eating and drinking not only as a religious action, but an action deſigned to be commemoratory of the redemption of the world by Jeſus Chriſt, publickly avows his relation to Chriſt as his *Lord* and *Maſter*, and *glories* in it, even in the *croſs of Chriſt*; which of old was [i] *to the Jew a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greek fooliſhneſs*; ſuch is the declaration which every communicant makes at the *Lord's-Table*. 'Tis the known language of his actions, ſo that if he were to ſay aloud, "I own myſelf a diſciple of Chriſt, I re-"joice in my being ſo, and am reſolved to "make his goſpel the rule of all my ac-"tions," it would not be more expreſſive and ſignificant of the thing, than the act of participating itſelf is. The *Lord's-Supper* is ſo remarkable a part of the chriſtian inſtitution, that * *Pliny* writing to the Emperor of *Rome* about the chriſtians, who at that time were liable to be puniſhed for their religion by the publick laws, gives this account of them, which he had received from ſome *Apoſtates*. "That they were wont to aſ-"ſemble

[i] 1 Cor. i. 23. * Epiſt. l. 10. ep. 97.

" ſemble on a ſtated day before it was " light (being then under perſecution) and " to ſing a hymn to Chriſt as a God; " binding themſelves by a *Sacrament*, not " to the commiſſion of any wickedneſs, " but that they would avoid thefts, rob- " beries, adulteries, would make good " their engagements, and when called up- " on, not deny what was committed to " their truſt." And this being ſo, that the *Sacrament* of the *Lord's-Supper* is ſo conſiderable a part of the worſhip of chriſtians as ſuch, and ſo peculiar to it, in which they declare themſelves the diſciples of Chriſt, how very ſtrange and unaccountable is it, that there ſhould be ſo many who ſeem to have no regard at all to this ordinance, living and dying in the neglect of it? would not theſe very perſons eſteem a church or a community of chriſtians very *imperfect*, in which the *Lord's-Supper* was never adminiſtred? and muſt not they then be very *imperfect chriſtians*, who having opportunities of attending upon this goſpel-inſtitution, continue time after time to decline them? ſurely ſuch as theſe will be condemn'd out of their own mouths. If a church would be imperfect without the *Lord's-Supper*, a ſingle chriſtian culpably depriving himſelf of it muſt be ſo too.

2. Another thing obſervable in this inſtitution of the *Lord's-Supper*, and which renders the neglect of it more criminal is, that

that it is *exceeding plain* and *intelligible*; I mean as it lies in the *ſcripture*, from whence we are taught that this ordinance has the nature of a religious feaſt, kept in memory of Jeſus Chriſt, the *author and finiſher of our faith*. While we are *eating this bread*, and *drinking this cup*, we are to think of Chriſt particularly as bearing the puniſhment of our ſins in his body on the croſs, and ſhedding his blood for the remiſſion of them: in this ſenſe 'tis eaſy to *diſcern the Lord's body*, tho' not in that which the church of *Rome* has invented; that indeed would put our faith to the ſtretch, by the utter contradiction it carries in it to our ſenſes and reaſon; and being itſelf an *impoſſibility*, cannot poſſibly be conceived. For who can conceive of a human body preſent under the appearances of bread and wine, and this wholly and intire in a thouſand different places at the ſame time, offered by the prieſt, eaten by the people, and glorified in heaven? ſuch a doctrine as this is abſolutely unintelligible, and a ſhort but deciſive proof of the fallibility of that church which has decreed it. We may confidently ſay it *may err*, when it has *actually* erred ſo very groſsly. But the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation is not a doctrine of *ſcripture*. What the ſcripture teaches concerning the relation which the *Lord's-Supper* has to Chriſt is eaſily to be apprehended, being only that of the *ſign* to the thing *ſignified*. This ordi-

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nance is intended to awaken our thoughts and remembrance of Chriſt, which it almoſt unavoidably does, when we know before-hand that it was appointed for this end, and this is the end we propoſe in coming to it.

3. To an ingenuous and devout mind the practice of this duty is as eaſy, as apprehending the nature and deſign of it. Nothing can be leſs burdenſome than the outward action; for what is it we are call'd to do, but to partake of *bread* and *wine* in memory of our beſt friend? and is this ſo hard a command, that ſome perſons are brought with ſo much difficulty to comply with it? we may reaſon here after the ſame manner as [k] *Naaman*'s ſervants did with him: *If the prophet had bid thee do ſome great thing, wouldſt thou not have done it; how much rather then when he ſaith to thee, Waſh, and be clean?* the means of cure would put him to ſo little trouble, that if he had not tried them he would have deſerved to carry his leproſy with him to the grave: ſo in the preſent caſe, there are no proofs, tho' never ſo painful, which we ſhould not have been ready to give of our devotedneſs to Chriſt, both for his ſake and our own. And ſhall we deny him this ſmall requeſt, that we now and then ſet apart ſome time to celebrate his memory together by this ſolemn rite? conſider he has not ſuffered the

[k] 2 Kings v. 13.

the heavy yoke of *Jewiſh* ceremonies to come upon the neck of his diſciples: inſtead of this multitude of ritual obſervances which the law enjoin'd, the very number of which would have made them grievous if nothing elſe had done it, our maſter has ſubſtituted but this one ſimple inſtitution of a ceremonial nature to be obſerved by chriſtians after their admiſſion into the church. And as to the outward action itſelf, 'tis ſo inconſiderable, that were it to return much oftner than it does in moſt ſocieties, we ſhould not think much to perform it; and this among other reaſons, out of thankfulneſs to our bleſſed Lord for the liberty he has purchaſed for his church from the bondage of *Jewiſh* ceremonies. 'Tis true this duty has an *inward* as well as an *outward* part; but the inward part is of a *moral* nature, conſiſting in the exerciſes of love and gratitude and devotion, which no pious perſon will think unreaſonable, ſince to all perſons ſo diſpoſed they muſt yield very great delight and ſatisfaction; which puts me in mind of the laſt thing obſervable in this command.

4. That tis *very advantageous*. 'Tis as much our privilege as our duty to eat and drink at the *Lord's-Table*, the more inexcuſable therefore we if we cannot be perſuaded to come, when intereſt conſpires with gratitude to enforce our duty upon us. I ſhow'd under the firſt part that this federal

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eating and drinking is expreſſive of a very great privilege enjoy'd by the worthy communicant, as well as of an obligation incumbent upon him, *viz.* the favour and friendſhip of Almighty God, together with all the bleſſings which can be ſuppos'd to flow from thence: and ſuch a privilege as this muſt certainly greatly inhance our obligations; our obligation to receive the *Lord's-Supper* being invited thereto, and our obligation to walk worthy of it afterwards. —The *Lord's-Supper* is alſo of ſpecial advantage to promote a lively and devout remembrance of Chriſt, and thereby to invigorate our holy and heavenly affections, and to aſſiſt our progreſs in all virtue and goodneſs. That the remembrance of Chriſt by thoſe who love him in ſincerity has naturally this good effect, will not be denied by any ſuch. Their love to Chriſt will be very much inflam'd by conſidering the repreſentation of his; and their deſire of imitating the example of their Saviour, and ſtanding compleat in his whole will, by their love to him.—Another obvious recommendation of this ordinance is the peculiar tendency it has to *unite* the hearts of chriſtians in brotherly kindneſs and charity. *Cicero* taking notice of that endearment which was found among perſons of the ſame family and kindred, gives this reaſon of it; *Magnum eſt enim habere eadem monumenta majorum, &c.* "It is no ſmall mat-

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" to have the ſame monuments of our an-
" ceſtors, the ſame ſacrifices and religious
" ceremonies, and the ſame common ſepul-
" chres." So here, and much more here than in the other caſe, to have the ſame Maſter, the ſame Redeemer, the ſame ſacred ſymbols by which they declare their common zeal for this divine perſon, their common intereſt in him, and their common relation one to another; what an incentive, what an aid muſt it be to chriſtians to *dwell together in unity*, and mutually to ſtudy and promote each others welfare and happineſs? And then the pleaſure which rewards the conſcientious obſervation of this command, as it carries its own recommendation in it, has this farther advantage, that it ſtrengthens our reſolutions, animates our holy zeal, and renders the practice of all the other duties of religion more delightful. Communicating in the *Lord's-Supper* being thus advantageous, the obligation to communicate muſt be anſwerable; for the greater the advantages, the greater the motive; and the greater the motive to any duty, the more inexcuſeable muſt be the neglect of it. Let this excite both non-communicants and communicants to reflect on their duty. Have I the proſpect if I receive worthily of ſo much honour and advantage accruing to me, and ſhall I not be perſuaded to come? ſhould the *non-communicant* ſay, ſince it is my happineſs to partake

take of the memorials of Chriſt's body and blood, and of the pledges of his love, (ſhould the *communicant* ſay) my reſolution is to walk ſo as to pleaſe my Lord and Maſter, adorn his doctrine, and contribute in my little ſphere to make the world entertain better thoughts both of the Maſter and of his diſciples.

Such being the *reaſons* (to which others might be added) which evince the obligations lying upon the diſciples of Chriſt to communicate in the *Sacrament* of his *Supper*, ſo obvious and forcible; it may juſtly occaſion ſome ſurprize how it comes to paſs, that ſo great a part of the chriſtian world ſatisfy themſelves in the neglect of this ordinance. I ſhall briefly examine the *reaſons* of this.

1. The moſt general and the leading reaſon ſeems to be a *ſuperſtitious* notion of the *Lord's-Supper*, which has too much prevail'd in the chriſtian church, to the great detriment of it, and does ſtill prevail; though I hope not ſo much as it has done. God grant it may wear out more and more, and that men may return to a ſober judicious ſenſe of the nature and deſign of this and every other part of our holy religion! Many chriſtians with regard to the *Lord's-Supper* ſeem to be in a condition like that of the [1] *Iſraelites* at the giving of the law, when they ſaw mount

[1] Exod. xix. 16.

Sinai burning with fire, and covered with blackneſs and tempeſt; a ſight ſo terrible that [m] *Moſes* ſaid, *I exceedingly fear and quake: and heard the ſound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard intreated that the word ſhould not be ſpoken to them any more:* they could hardly be more afraid to approach the *mountain*, than ſome chriſtians are to come to the *Lord's-Table*; as if bounds were ſet about it on purpoſe, as about Mount *Sinai* to keep off people, and they had the ſame order as the people then had, *not to break through to come up to the Lord, leſt he ſhould break forth upon them:* they could ſcarcely more dread the voice of thunder in which the law was delivered, than thoſe timerous miſtaken chriſtians do the command, *Do this in remembrance of me*; not conſidering that they *are come to mount Zion*, not to *mount Sinai*; *to Jeſus the mediator of the new covenant*; [n] *through whom we have acceſs by one ſpirit to the Father Almighty*; and ſurely then can have no juſt cauſe to fear approaching the mediator himſelf, or rather the memorials of him at his *Table*. Our mediator is not ſo terrible, as to make us ſtand in need of another mediator in order to our coming before him with boldneſs; nay, *we are come to the blood of ſprinkling, which ſpeaketh better things* than the law did, being a confirmation of all the promiſes of the goſpel: and what then ſhould occa-

[m] Heb. xii. 18. [n] Eph. ii. 18

occaſion, or what can juſtify ſuch dreadful apprehenſions of the *Lord's-Supper?* which may very well be called *ſuperſtitious*, as they are without all juſt ground, and have no other tendency than to inſlave and debilitate the minds of chriſtians; to make them of a *ſervile* ſpirit inſtead of inſpiring a *ſpirit of adoption*, and cheriſhing the love of God and of Jeſus, which is at once the nobleſt, and the moſt delightful part of practical religion. 'Tis not unlikely that what chiefly gave riſe to and ſpread this wrong notion of the *Holy-Supper*, and made people advance it ſo much above the level of all other religious duties in reſpect of the *ſolemnity*, was the doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*, or the real corporeal preſence, *i. e.* the change of the elements of bread and wine into the very body and blood of Chriſt, to which they were taught to pay a religious worſhip: and to eat what they worſhipp'd had certainly ſomething more than *ſolemn*, even ſomething *horrible* in it. And that which increas'd the ſuperſtitious veneration for this *Sacrament* was, the denying the cup to the *Laiety*; of this none but the prieſts, the miniſters of the Lord, muſt have the privilege to partake. Thus the ſuperſtition may be ſuppos'd to have begun, and having taken poſſeſſion of the minds of men, was not eaſily to be driven out again; not at the *Reformation* itſelf, when the doctrines of popery were baniſhed out of proteſtant

churches, but too much of the ſpirit retain'd which was the conſequence of thoſe doctrines; and particularly this ſuperſtitious regard to the *Lord's-Supper*; which methinks Proteſtants ſhould be the more willing to part with, upon the account of its popiſh original. The *Lord's-Supper* is without all doubt a moſt ſolemn ordinance; and is it not a very ſolemn thing to draw nigh to God in any of the duties of divine worſhip? to God the greateſt, moſt glorious and adorable Being? The *ſolemnity* of this Sacrament principally depends upon that which is common to it with the ordinary parts of worſhip, *viz.* the addreſſes to God which accompany it, which carry ſomething more ſolemn in them than the *Lord's-Supper* itſelf does, conſidered merely as a *feaſt* of *commemoration* inſtituted in honour of the great Friend and Saviour of mankind. 'Tis true this ordinance has in it or attending it all that is ſolemn in other ordinances, with ſomething additional, I mean the *manner* of approaching God through the ſacrifice of his Son, repreſented by the viſible memorials of it; but then this does not add ſo much to the *ſolemnity* of this religious action, as it does to the *encouragement* we have [o] *to come with boldneſs to the throne of the heavenly grace; having not only a great high-prieſt paſſed into the heavens*; but alſo the *memorials* of that *ſacrifice*, by which he obtained the pardon

[o] Heb. iv. 16.

pardon of ſin, acceptance with God, and eternal redemption for us. So that here is no room at all for a ſuperſtitious fear; nor is the *ſolemnity* of this ordinance any more than that of the other duties of religion, a reaſon why we ſhould baniſh ourſelves from it.

2. There are thoſe who will ſay, they do not *refuſe*, but only *delay* to come to the *Lord's-Table*. As there is no particular time of life fix'd when they are firſt to receive the *Holy Communion*, they continue putting it off from time to time, and only wait for a more convenient opportunity of doing it. But when will that more convenient opportunity come? as to many does not this excuſe, poor as it is, ſerve them for years together? 'Tis true, no exact time is limited, when our obligation to receive the *Lord's-Supper* begins to take place; but what then, if the nature of the command be ſuch as to explain itſelf in this reſpect? as it certainly does; ſince the obligation to obſerve any command muſt commence as ſoon as perſons have an ability, and can be made rationally ſenſible of the nature of the duty, and the advantages attending it; and that is when they are arrived to years of maturity, ſo as to be capable of ſerious conſideration, of acting ſteadily in religion, and of ſerving God and celebrating the memory of their Saviour with underſtanding: and therefore I

could wiſh that *younger perſons* would take this matter into their deliberate thoughts, and do now earneſtly intreat them for their Saviour's ſake, (of their obligations to whom I hope they are in ſome degree ſenſible) and for their own, to do it. I ſuppoſe them to be of age to judge and act for themſelves, not only to diſcern good and evil, but to apprehend the great doctrines of chriſtianity, particularly that of Chriſt's being the *Saviour of ſinners, and only mediator between God and man,* in memory of whom, and with a deſign more effectually to ingage his diſciples to love, imitate and obey him, the *Sacrament* of the *Supper* was inſtituted; and what then ſhould forbid their being receiv'd to, and receiving the *Holy Communion*, being before competently inſtructed in the nature and deſign of it, which I likewiſe ſuppoſe? Of the three great yearly feſtivals that were obſerved among the *Jews* by divine appointment, the *Paſſover* correſponds very nearly to the *Lord's-Supper* under the chriſtian diſpenſation. The age when they made their *firſt* appearance at the celebration of this ordinance, the *Jewiſh* writers tell us was at fartheſt when they were *twelve* or *thirteen* years old; which is rendred the more probable by what the [p] *Evangeliſt* relates concerning our Saviour, that *his parents went to Jeruſalem every year at the feaſt of the Paſſover*; *and*

[p] Luke ii. 41, 42.

and when he was twelve years old they carried him up with them, after the manner of the feaſt. Certainly as the work of our redemption by Jeſus Chriſt is of a more ſignal nature, and much greater importance than any of theſe temporal deliverances and favours, which God vouchſafed to the *Jewiſh* church and nation, and for that reaſon deſerves to be had in everlaſting remembrance; ſo the way of commemorating it in the *Lord's-Supper*, with the intention of this ordinance to promote a ſpirit of piety, and the practice of all goodneſs in the communicants, are things which *young perſons* grown up to years of diſcretion with a little reflection may eaſily underſtand. And why then do not *parents* put thoſe of their children who are ſoberly inclin'd upon coming to the *Lord's-Table* ſooner than is uſual? I need not ſay I am now ſpeaking of ſuch parents as communicate themſelves, for from others it cannot be expected. Why ſhould not *young perſons*, who have ſuch a ſufficient ripeneſs of judgment, and ſobriety of behaviour, be perſuaded to reflect and perform their duty in this reſpect? they will ſoon find the advantage and pleaſure of it in a greater compoſure of their paſſions, a more exact regularity in their converſation, a better diſpoſition of mind for the performance of other duties, and more thought and prudence and ſucceſs by the bleſſing of God in the management of their common affairs. I

ſhould be the better pleas'd to ſee more *young perſons* coming to the *Lord's-Table*, as they would hereby be good examples to *older perſons*, who are now only bad examples to them, and might perhaps make them aſham'd of their delays; for undoubtedly whatever may be ſaid in excuſe of *younger perſons* when they deſire longer time, ſuch who are almoſt come to the middle part of life, or paſt it, it may be in the decline of it, can have nothing to plead for themſelves; they cannot pretend that they are not of age ſufficient for the thing to which they are preſs'd, nor with any grace talk of delaying yet longer, who have delay'd much too long already. For God's ſake therefore, and as they regard their duty to their Lord and Redeemer, and the proſperity of their own ſouls, let them not thus egregiouſly impoſe upon themſelves any longer. One would imagine that it was ſomething exceeding grievous and burthenſome, that they were exhorted to perform, that they are thus continually putting it off; when it is to do nothing elſe but what their own ſenſe of duty, and a principle of ingenuity, gratitude, and ſelf-intereſt ſhould not ſuffer them to be eaſy in omitting, though they were never preſs'd to it. How long do they intend to go on thus? till death overtakes them while they are thus delaying, cuts off their trifling purpoſes, and ſo they appear before their Saviour and great Judge, without

out having once ſhown forth his death according to his moſt expreſs command?

3. The plea of great numbers is, that they are *not fit* to partake of this *Holy Supper*. Why ſo? are they *ſcandalous* ſinners? do they live in a conſtant known violation of the precepts of the goſpel? if this be the caſe, I will allow that they are not qualified to approach the *Lord's-Table*; and that no man can receive *worthily* who lives in *habitual* wickedneſs, both before and after, and ſo goes on alternately attending upon his devotions and his vices. We will ſuppoſe a notorious habitual ſinnner to receive the *Sacrament*, nay, and that he ſincerely intends the action in honour of Chriſt as his Lord and Maſter, and purpoſes future amendment at the time of performing it; yet ſo far is ſuch a purpoſe as this from making a man a *worthy receiver* (as things appear to me) that one of this character cannot *pray worthily*: for how can thoſe deſires and reſolutions be in any proper ſenſe *worthy* of or *ſuitable* to the duty performed, which are ſo imperfect as to be *without effect*, not now and then only, *but always?* and tho' a man had better *pray* with ſuch feeble deſires than not at all; it will not follow that he had better come to the *Sacrament* too, than delay it till he has given ſome ſigns of his repentance in his life and converſation. Prayer is a *natural* and *univerſal* means of piety and virtue, in

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the total neglect of which 'tis impoſſible a man ſhould be *actually* good, and next to impoſſible that he ſhould be in the *way* to become ſo; which cannot be ſaid of the *Lord's-Supper*, this being a poſitive inſtitution. Hath a man been guilty of drunkenneſs, murder, adultery, or any other the moſt flagitious crimes? he cannot do better than immediately caſt himſelf down in the preſence of God, confeſſing his ſin, humbling himſelf for it, imploring mercy and the like: but ſurely no one would think it right to go from the commiſſion of ſuch crimes to the *Lord's-Table*. Not to ſpeak of *ſecret* or *family* prayer, there is not that *ſcandal* to the chriſtian ſociety in admitting notorious ſinners to mingle in the publick prayers of the church, as in permitting, not to ſay inviting them, to come to the *Lord's-Supper*: eating and drinking are directly and particularly the acts of every communicant, acts diſtinguiſhing of the chriſtian ſociety, and a mark of friendſhip between the maſter and his diſciples; in all which reſpects this duty differs from prayer, which in its very nature ſuits the condition of a ſinner, and in which therefore he may be allowed to join without offence, if he behave decently during the worſhip; and therefore upon the whole, I think ſuch perſons are in the right to ſtay away from the *Lord's-Supper*, till they are better diſpoſed to make a proper uſe of it,

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and have given ſome proof of this diſpoſition to themſelves and others. But then a vicious life, for which no excuſe is to be given in *any man*, and leaſt of all in a *Chriſtian*, can be no excuſe for the omiſſion of a plain duty; an omiſſion which inſtead of having its guilt extenuated by this plea, is a very great aggravation of the guilt of a wicked life, which is the occaſion of it. They ſhould rather therefore argue thus, "I at preſent lead ſuch a life as I can neither reconcile with the rules of the chriſtian religion, nor with a reaſonable hope of an intereſt in the promiſes and bleſſings of it; I will therefore immediately quit the guilty, the dangerous way I am in, and then as I ſhall be prepar'd for death, which I have now the greateſt reaſon to dread the thoughts of, eſpecially conſidering that there is not a moment when it may not ſurprize me; ſo I ſhall be qualified to ſhow my gratitude to my Saviour by joining with his diſciples in the commemoration of his death and ſufferings, and the participation of all the fruits and benefits of them."—So much for thoſe whoſe character is known to be *vicious* by themſelves and others.

Shall we therefore encourage none to come but thoſe who are *aſſured* of their being in a ſtate of favour with God, ſanctified and pardoned? or who have very good reaſon to think ſo, and are troubled with very few doubts about it? this, I take it,

would

would be an *extream* on the other hand. If perſons live ſo as not to diſcredit their chriſtian profeſſion, if they have good diſpoſitions which they in ſome meaſure cultivate and improve, though it ſhould be doubtful whether they are prevailing, I cannot ſee that they have a ſufficient cauſe for abſenting themſelves from the *Sacrament*; which might be of admirable ſervice to fortify their holy reſolutions, and to invigorate their pious affections, particularly their love to Chriſt, which they are conſcious to their having in ſome degree, as likewiſe of it's not being without all effect: and tho' it ſhould really be ſo that they are not thorough converts, and the love of God and of Jeſus has not yet gotten the entire maſtery over their other paſſions, yet I can by no means think that thoſe words of the apoſtle [p] *Paul* do at all belong to them, that *he who eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lord's body:* beſides obſerving that the original word tranſlated *damnation* might and ought to have been rendred by *judgment*, meaning ſome *temporal* judgment, which is a much ſofter one; it is enough to ſhow that ſuch as I am ſpeaking of do not fall under the weight of St. *Paul*'s cenſure, foraſmuch as they *diſcern the Lord's body*, putting a very great difference betwixt that and their common meals, and having a very ſincere deſire to honour their Saviour, and

[p] 1 Cor. xi. 29.

and to be in favour with him, which they teſtify by bringing forth many if not all the fruits of righteouſneſs in ſome degree, tho' not in ſo great a degree as they ſhould. And the more fully to remove all doubt in this matter, I ſhall briefly conſider the irregularity of the *Corinthians* noted by St. *Paul*; [q] *When ye come together into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's-Supper: for in eating every one taketh before other his own ſupper*, and *one is hungry and another is drunken.* The queſtion here is, whether this relates to the *Lord's-Supper* itſelf, or to the *Agapæ*, i. e. the *Love-feaſts* which us'd to accompany it in the primitive times, or to ſome other entertainment which of their own fancy theſe irregular *Corinthians* held before they proceeded to partake of the *Sacrament.* One can hardly conceive that it was at the *Lord's-Supper* itſelf they behav'd in this indecent manner, ſince they could not but know, that all belonging to that was only *bread* and *wine*; whereas here ſome of them ſeem'd to have *eaten* as well as *drunk* to exceſs: why elſe is it ſaid, *one is hungry, another is drunken*, if the term *drunken* was not deſigned to comprehend exceſſes of both kinds in eating as well as drinking? And then again the *Lord's-Supper* being a feaſt of which all in *common* were to partake in memory of their Saviour, it is not very credible that ſome would not only take this

[q] 1 Cor. xi. 20, 21.

Supper before others, but without any care that the *poor* should have wherewithal to keep the feast. As to the *Agapæ*, or love-feasts, it is most probable from * *antiquity* that they were not celebrated till after the *Lord's-Supper*, and being feasts of charity, the very nature of them will not admit of our supposing that the *poor* were excluded from them. The most likely way of solving the difficulty seems to me to be this, that the *Corinthians* of their own heads made the *Lord's-Supper* an *appendix* or second entertainment to another feast, in order to conform it to the manner of communicating at the *first* institution, which was at the *close* of the *passover*. † *Socrates* in his ecclesiastical history mentions some *Egyptians* living near *Alexandria*, who partook of the *Sacrament* in a different manner from what was usual in the *christian* church; making merry, and filling themselves with all sorts of food, and then in the evening, after this, partaking of the *Sacrament*, which he calls *mysteries*. This looks so much like a parallel instance, that we may very well suppose the practice of the *Corinthians* condemned by St. *Paul* to have been the same with that of these *Egyptians*. And the *Apostle* might very well say, *that this was not to eat the Lord's-Supper*; for the ultimate design of their meeting together being to partake

* See Plin. l. 10. ep. 97. and Tertul. Apol. c. 39.

† Lib. 5. c. 22.

partake of the *Lord's-Supper*, to which the other feaſt was only introductory, as it ſhow'd no great reſpect for the *Lord's-Supper*, or knowledge of the nature of it, to behave ſo at a feaſt connected with it; ſo by the exceſſes they were guilty of (aggravated by their uncommunicativeneſs to the *poor* members of the church) they put themſelves into a condition in which they could not poſſibly *diſcern* as they ought the *Lord's body*; this was *eating and drinking unworthily* in the moſt notorious manner. But what has this to do with their caſe, or how can they be affected by the *Apoſtle*'s cenſure, who come in a *ſober* and *reverent* manner, and with a ſincere deſire and purpoſe to walk worthy of this *Sacrament*, and of all the other parts of the chriſtian religion; tho' it may be they are not ſo perfect in their conformity to the goſpel, and ſo thoroughly confirmed in their good reſolutions and diſpoſitions as they ſhould be, and perhaps, are in a way to become? and therefore the objection of *unfitneſs* is eaſily and ſufficiently anſwered. I would conclude this head with this reflection, that communicants of a ſober and regular behaviour, may, by what has been now offered, be more fully ſatisfied in what they have done in coming to the *Lord's-Table*, ſo as to be freed from any ſcruples they may have been troubled with upon this account; and not only ſo, but may rejoice in

their having choſen this good part, for ſo doubtleſs it is. " Inſtead of giving way " to a *ſpirit of bondage again to fear*, think, " O my ſoul! of the duty which thou haſt " before thee, and in the omiſſion of " which thou didſt wiſely reſolve not to al- " low thyſelf, and of the advantages an- " nexed to the conſcientious diſcharge of it; " and with equal diligence and chearfulneſs, " joined with earneſt prayer to God for " his aſſiſtance, apply thy mind and heart " to the devout commemoration of thy " once dying and dead, but now riſen, ex- " alted, ever living and affectionate Lord."

4. Others urge their being *involved in ſo much buſineſs*, as not to be able to ſpend the time neceſſary by way of *preparation* for the *Sacrament*. But the queſtion is, whether the multiplicity of their buſineſs be what they cannot well avoid? if it be their own fault that their time is ſo much taken up with the world, inſtead of making their worldly cares a pretence for their abſenting themſelves from the *Lord's-Table*, they ſhould immediately ſet themſelves to retrench theſe cares, and thereby cut off this occaſion of their neglecting a plain duty of religion; and ſo without all doubt they would, if it was really their deſire to have all hindrances remov'd out of their way in order to their partaking of this goſpel *feaſt*. If their being ingaged in a great deal of buſineſs is not the effect of *choice*

but

but *neceſſity*, and they would willingly, if they could, ſhake off this and every other encumbrance, they have no manner of reaſon to baniſh themſelves from any ordinance of the goſpel upon this account. Becauſe their hands are full of the world on the *week-day*, they do not therefore, when the *Lord's-Day* returns, refuſe to join in the ſtated duties of it; and why ſhould they deprive themſelves of the privilege of communicating in the *Lord's-Supper*, any more than of performing the other parts of divine worſhip? or think themſelves unqualified for one, any more than for the other? 'tis to be hoped whenever they come to the houſe of God, and unite in prayers to God, or in hearing his moſt holy word, they labour to diſcharge their *hearts* of every foreign care, that [r] *they may attend upon the Lord without diſtraction*; and having laid aſide the thoughts of all earthly things, they might as well receive the *Lord's-Supper*, as ingage in any other religious duty, if there be nothing elſe to prevent it, but their being taken up more than they deſire with the affairs of this life at other times. But by this means they are not able to devote the requiſite time to the duties of *preparation*. To which it may be replied, that what we call *preparation* for the *Sacrament* being only a *prudential* thing, no where enjoin'd in the word of God,

[r] 1 Corin. vii. 35.

muſt not be look'd upon as *abſolutely neceſſary*; much leſs the ſpending ſuch an exact portion of time in the exerciſes of devotion. Let us employ what time we can command, and find by experience to be of uſe to this purpoſe, and we have nothing farther to trouble ourſelves about, but putting our hearts in the beſt order we can, and ſo moderating our affections to all theſe ſublunary things, that as often as we are called to any duty, we may be in a proper diſpoſition for the performance of it: let us do this and we need not doubt of our being acceptable gueſts at the *Table* of the Lord.

5. The laſt hindrance I ſhall mention to men's coming to the *Table* of the Lord, and which I fear is the moſt common, is that perſons apprehend, that the *Sacrament* will oblige them to *greater ſtrictneſs of converſation* than they ſhould otherwiſe be bound to obſerve, or ſhall be able to make good, and by that means increaſe their guilt; and that therefore they had better for their own ſafety continue to abſent themſelves. But let me take the liberty to tell them, that this is ſuch a ſort of reaſon, as they would not ſatisfy themſelves with in any other caſe where their affections were ingaged. Don't they know, that whatever bleſſing they enjoy, temporal or ſpiritual, their obligation to ſerve and glorify God is thereby rendred the greater? are they

they not under ſtronger obligations to a holy life for being *Chriſtians*, than if they were *Heathens*? *Proteſtants* than if they had been train'd up in the darkneſs of *Popery*? but if it was in their choice, would they therefore change conditions with *Papiſts* or *Heathens*? ſurely no, becauſe they know, tho' perhaps they do not conſider it as they ſhould, that their advantages are far beyond thoſe of the other, and cannot be ſufficiently priz'd. Do they not likewiſe know, that any ſuperior degree of *learning*, or *riches*, or *power*, is a talent for which they are accountable to the Governor and Judge of the world, and which calls for higher degrees of gratitude to God; and as the conſequence of that, of activity and diligence in his ſervice? ſo that if poſſeſſing ſo much greater abilities than others, they yet do not more good than they, or not ſo much, they will be left inexcuſable: but notwithſtanding this, do they chuſe to be *ignorant*, and, *poor* and *diſregarded*, that they may have the *leſs* account to give at laſt? 'tis certain from univerſal experience that they do not: and why then ſhould the *preſent* be the only excepted caſe, in which they deny themſelves a moſt invaluable privilege, only that they may not be ſo ſtrongly obliged to a regular and chriſtian converſation? to ſuch a converſation they are obliged by their profeſſion of chriſtianity, whether they are communicants or no,

no, to an obſervation of the ſelf-ſame duties and virtues, and an abſtinence from the ſame vices, as they value the favour of their God and their Saviour, and their own everlaſting happineſs; and let me add, are under the greater obligations to it, for having the opportunities of coming to the *Lord's-Table*, whether they make uſe of theſe opportunities or not. 'Tis not only *actually* receiving the *Lord's-Supper*, but their being *commanded*, *invited*, and *encouraged* to receive it, that they are to give an account of; nor is their privilege the leſs, nor conſequently their obligation to be thankful for it, becauſe they neglect to make any advantage of it: on the contrary, ſo much the greater is both their guilt and their folly. They are obliged to practiſe nothing *after* the *Sacrament*, but what they were *before* oblig'd to, if they would enter into the kingdom of heaven; and to abſtain from no indulgences but thoſe which by the goſpel-conſtitution will exclude us from thence; their fancy therefore of ſecuring to themſelves a greater liberty by abſenting from the *Lord's-Table* is very fooliſh: they are ſtill talking of the danger of partaking of the *Lord's-Supper*, and not walking worthy of it; in the mean-while forgetting, that a ſinful life will be their ruin tho' they never communicate, and that there is a danger as great, or rather greater on the other ſide, I mean in habi-

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tually neglecting a plain inſtitution of the goſpel. To which let us farther add, that if our obligation to walk circumſpectly is greater *after* we have received the *Sacrament*, our helps, and encouragements, and pleaſures are greater too; and that therefore upon the whole, we can have no good reaſon upon any ſuch account as this to refuſe another invitation to the *Lord's-Table*, which I now give you in the name of my great Maſter and yours.

To conclude, the inſtitution of the *Supper*, and the peculiar *nature* and *deſign* of it, have been explained, the *obligations* lying on the diſciples of Chriſt to communicate in this *Sacrament* ſhown, and the moſt plauſible *objections* againſt it anſwered; and I would fain hope, that all this will not be without ſome good effect, both with regard to the *judgment* and the *affections* of my reader; helping to give him a diſtincter notion of this part of his religion, the wiſdom and the deſign of the inſtitution, to convince him that 'tis equally his duty and his advantage to obſerve it, and to produce in him in concurrence with his own ſerious conſideration, and the grace of God, all thoſe good diſpoſitions, which the remembrance of Chriſt requires, and is ſo well fitted to ſtrengthen and perfect. Whatever defects there have been in the manner of handling this ſubject, yet I will take the liberty to ſay, it muſt be

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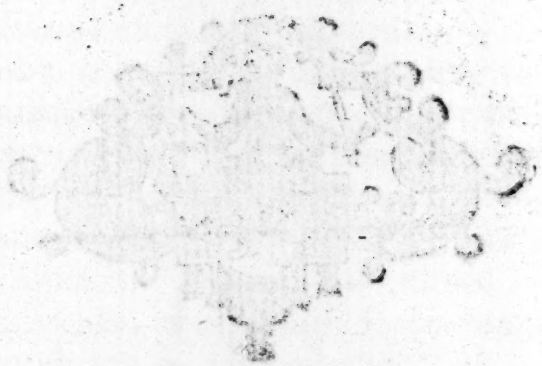
the reader's own fault if he is nothing at all the better for what has been laid before him. Enough I am perſuaded has been offered to gain the aſſent of any impartial perſon, and if ſeriouſly conſidered, to prevail with all to devote themſelves to God and to the Redeemer, to love them more fervently, and to ſerve them more diligently and faithfully. God grant our communions may be more numerous! and communicants more eminent and exemplary for every chriſtian virtue! The *Lord's-Supper* is undoubtedly a moſt excellent inſtitution, and were it but improv'd as it ought, would appear to be ſo to the conviction of the whole world. Would to God that all thoſe, who in obedience to the command of their maſter eat and drink at his *Table* in remembrance of him, would duly conſider this; taking care to behave at all times ſuitably to the dignity of their character, the ſolemn nature of their vows and engagements, and the greatneſs of their obligations: then would others, *ſeeing their good works, glorify their Father who is in heaven*, and not be eaſy till they had join'd with them in celebrating the memory of our common Lord and Saviour, ſaying, "Come and let us alſo go to this feaſt, "and at once honour Chriſt, and pro-"mote, as they have done, our edification "in holineſs and comfort:" then would the church of Chriſt be more glorious and

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beautiful, and his religion a ſource of more abounding and more permanent pleaſure and ſatisfaction: then, in a word, as the excellence and uſefulneſs of all the commandments and inſtitutions of the goſpel would be evident, ſo particularly of the *Lord's-Supper*; for which we ſhould eſteem ourſelves obliged to praiſe God, as in it we do for his wonderful goodneſs to the children of men.

DEVO-

6 JY 53



DEVOTIONAL

EXERCISES,

Relating to the

Lord's-Supper.


BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

READER.

THE Author's design in this little Present which he makes the publick, is not to confine and fetter the devotion of pious communicants, but assist it, by furnishing them with materials for meditation, which they may have always at hand, to make use of when and in what manner they judge convenient. Souls the best turn'd for the exercises of the spiritual life have not at all times the same happy flow of thought, or liveliness of affection; and, when this is the case, that their usual activity fails them, who can tell but they may find something or other here which may help to rouse their attention, to lead them into a train of thinking, and so fan the sacred fire that it may burn the more brightly? and if this may be suppos'd of these superior souls, much more of those in lower classes. As devotion, true, enlighten'd devotion, is one of the most sublime, and, withal, most delightful and useful attainments of the human mind, being not only a very great support and refreshment to it, a sort of heavenly musick in the house of its pilgrimage, but a considerable help to the most animated prac-

tice of all virtue and goodneſs; I ſhall eſteem myſelf not a little happy to contribute in any degree to the ſpreading, or the exerciſe and improvement, of ſo excellent a diſpoſition: I have ſincerely attempted it, and have nothing farther I can do but to commend what follows to the bleſſing of God, and the Reader's candid and ſerious peruſal.

Farewel,

H. G.



DEVO-

DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES,

Relating to the

Lord's-Supper,

Before, or Preparatory to receiving.

SECT. I.

NOW, O my ſoul, that thou art retir'd from the world, let me aſk thee, as in the preſence of the all-knowing God, haſt thou ever ſeriouſly conſider'd thy *nature*, thy *intereſt*, and thy *danger?* that thou art a ſpiritual being, reaſonable and immortal, capable of other and nobler pleaſures than thou receiveſt from the enjoyments of the world, and by the inſtrumentality of the body, of a higher and more permanent felicity than falls within the limits of this tranſitory life? and that without a great deal of thought and care, thou art liable

to be excluded from all title to this, which is thy proper portion, and at the ſame time depriv'd of all thoſe inferior good things which thou art too apt to miſtake for it, and to place in the room of it? inſtead of attaining happineſs, the thing thou art ſeeking after, to fall into a ſtate of miſery from which there is no hope of riſing again? haſt thou conſider'd, O my ſoul, what the Son of God hath done to awaken thee out of the common lethargy, to cure thee of thy blindneſs, to purchaſe happineſs for thee, and to direct, aſſiſt, and animate thee in the purſuit of it? Acknowledge, O my ſoul! thy infinite obligations, under God the firſt mover, to the Redeemer of mankind, the great Lover of ſouls, who, to ranſom them from the evils they ſuffer'd or were expos'd to, and to raiſe them to the higheſt degrees of perfection and bleſſedneſs their nature and faculties would admit of, came down from the boſom of the Father into this ſinful world, cloathed himſelf with human fleſh, and human infirmities, taught the moſt excellent doctrine, enforc'd it by the moſt perfect example, and the moſt precious and divine promiſes, and freely ſealed it with his own blood; which we are taught to regard not only as the blood of a *Martyr*, but an *Atoning Sacrifice*; who eſtabliſh'd a church, or ſociety of faithful perſons, and took care that nothing ſhould be wanting for its preſervation in the world,

world, and continual edification in faith, and holineſs, and charity, and conſolation. And canſt thou deny any thing to ſuch a friend, ſuch a benefactor as Jeſus hath been to thee? when he hath provided thee with all the means and aſſiſtances thou needeſt, in order to thy going on to perfection, among others with the inſtitution of the *Holy-Supper*, ſhouldſt thou not thankfully accept, and faithfully improve them? O my ſoul! reſolve, and let nothing turn thee from thy purpoſe, that the ſerving and imitating thy Saviour, and preparing thyſelf for that bleſſed immortality which he hath procur'd for, and reveal'd and promis'd to thee, ſhall be thy chief aim, thy conſtant employment, during the reſt of thy pilgrimage upon earth.

SECT. II.

BUT what is it, O my ſoul, that thy Saviour requires of thee? I hear him ſaying, *Do this in remembrance of me:* but what is it that he would have us do? is it to make ourſelves of no reputation and become poor for his ſake, as he did for ours? to renounce every thing that this life hath in it moſt valuable or pleaſant? to afflict the body with painful and uſeleſs auſterities?

ſterities? and to retreat from all the affairs and converſation of the world into barren deſarts, and frightful ſolitudes? no ſuch thing; tho' had he bid thee give him ſome ſuch ſevere proofs of thy remembrance of him as theſe, thou couldſt not in gratitude have refus'd him; how much more when he only enjoins thee, in a religious manner, to make uſe of bread and wine as ſacramental memorials of his body broken, and his blood ſhed for us! how eaſy the command! and how inexcuſeable thoſe who, calling themſelves the diſciples of Chriſt, will not, through ſome fault of their own, be perſuaded to do as they are commanded, or do it negligently and indevoutly! haſt thou never heard and admir'd at, the cruelties which the worſhippers of falſe Gods, not only voluntarily but with a ſort of pride, have practiſed upon themſelves, in honour of dumb idols? thy merciful Lord calls for no ſuch teſt of thy love to him: he makes this, indeed, a neceſſary qualification for thy being his diſciple, as it is in the nature of the thing, that thou keep his commandments; but either thou knoweſt not what his commandments are, or muſt be oblig'd to own that they are not grievous. That I love my fellow-diſciples, and cultivate a benevolent diſpoſition towards all mankind; that I be humble, meek, merciful, temperate; that I be not anxiouſly thoughtful about future time and

events,

events, lay not up for myſelf a treaſure on earth but in heaven, that my treaſure being there, my heart may be there alſo; theſe, and ſuch like, are the commands of the Bleſſed Jeſus, who, as a means admirably adapted to my delightful progreſs in theſe and all other virtues of the chriſtian life, does farther enjoin a devout attendance at his *Table*, there to receive the pledges of his love, and grace to help in every time of need.

SECT. III.

3. MUST thou not acknowledge, O my ſoul, that thy Redeemer's yoke is eaſy, and his burthen light, if thou reflect that inſtead of thoſe numerous rites and ceremonies which the *Moſaic Law* appointed, and which render'd that ſervice ſo burthenſome, that an *Apoſtle* of *Chriſt* ſcruples not to call it *a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear*, the *Chriſtian Church* hath no other obſervances of a ritual nature but thoſe two ſimple and eaſy ones (eaſy to be underſtood, and as eaſy to be practis'd) of *Baptiſm*, and the *Lord's-Supper*; and that of theſe two the latter only is intended to be repeated? ſo little does our divine maſter delight in abridg-

abridging his followers of any liberty they can reaſonably deſire, and ſo much is he concern'd that their duty ſhould be their pleaſure, or a natural ſource of it. The things recommended and moſt ſtrongly inſiſted on by his goſpel, are thoſe weightier matters of the law, *judgment*, *mercy*, and the *love of God*, things intrinſically good, and amiable; and to the honour of this *Sacrament* of the *Supper* it may be obſerv'd, that, tho' a *poſitive inſtitution*, yet, to thoſe who receive it in a right manner, 'tis of unſpeakable uſe to promote the life of God in the ſoul, and the practice of all thoſe virtues by which we reſemble God in the converſation. Wherefore, O my ſoul! inſtead of being influenc'd by any objections of weak, or ill-deſigning men, againſt the inſtitution itſelf, or any trifling excuſes that may tempt thee to neglect the obſervation of it, or vain terrors which would rob thee of the pleaſure it was deſigned to afford thee, with all readineſs obey the invitation to this ſacred feaſt, and with all gladneſs of heart ſet thyſelf to celebrate the love of thy Saviour in it.

SECT. IV.

4. NOR aſk, why Chriſt would have us eat and drink in memory of him, when we could remember him without

out any ſuch ceremony? confeſs, O my ſoul, oblig'd as thou art, to have thy Saviour perpetually in mind! haſt thou not found it too eaſy and common a thing for thee to forget him? to loſe thyſelf and the thoughts of an abſent Saviour amidſt the cares, or amuſements and delights of this vain world? 'tis not what thou *ſhouldſt* do, is the queſtion; thou ſhouldſt, there is no doubt, be ever looking unto Jeſus, and embrace every opportunity of converſing with him in thy thoughts and meditations, without any other monitor, or prompter, than a grateful heart; this thou ſhouldſt do; but is it thus thou *wouldſt* act, if left entirely to thy own diſcretion and choice? record this, O my ſoul! among the inſtances of the kind and tender care of thy Redeemer, that he calls thee off from the purſuit of the world, hath made it thy duty to diſmiſs thy meaner paſſions, and, in the abſence of theſe, to commemorate him in this ſolemn manner, and by theſe external ſigns, that thou mightſt have thy thoughts of him better fixed, and thy affections more powerfully actuated and enlivened, and by this means be diſpoſed more naturally to remember him at other times, and in the ordinary courſe of thy life. From this ſacramental tranſaction, frequently and rightly perform'd, will proceed ſuch a ſtrong attachment to thy Saviour, ſuch a prevailing bent in thy inclinations, as will make it

next to impoſſible for thee to live in an habitual forgetfulneſs of that Jeſus, whoſe dying love, with unfeigned zeal and gratitude, thou haſt ſo often ſhewed forth in his *Supper*; he will dwell in thy heart by faith, have the poſſeſſion of all thy faculties, be precious in thy eſteem, and dear to thy memory. And then farther, attend to this, as a conſideration of no ſmall weight, that the remembrance of Chriſt in the *Holy Communion* is not a private and ſolitary act, but of a publick nature, a declaration of the faith of the *Chriſtian Church*, and of the high veneration it hath for a crucified Saviour, and ſo is better fitted to do honour to his memory, and, as an everlaſting monument, to ſpread and perpetuate it in the world. And ſurely O my ſoul! this muſt be a very great recommendation of this ordinance to thee, and to all the faithful in Chriſt, that by publickly and conſtantly attending upon it, every one of you in ſome degree helps to ſupport the memory of your great Redeemer among men. Would not every one that remembers Chriſt himſelf have others to remember him too? would he not have his love dwell in the hearts, and his name upon the tongues of all men? and the little he can do to this end muſt he not do, and be exceeding glad if he could do more?

SECT.

SECT. V.

5. THINK again, O my ſoul, with what view our gracious Redeemer obliges us to remember him! He had ſome deſign in demanding this of his followers, eſpecially in appointing ſuch a form of commemoration. Did this deſign regard himſelf, or us? was it for his own ſake, or for ours, that he appears ſo deſirous of living in our remembrance? for the honour that will redound to him, or the benefit and conſolation that we ſhall receive from hence? For our ſakes, no doubt, was this intended; not properly for his own, who can gain nothing by us, and hath a dignity and greatneſs inherent in him that exalts him far above all the motives of vain glory. How trifling and contemptible is the honour of having his name recorded by us, the offspring of the duſt, and tranſmitted down from one generation of ſhort-liv'd creatures to another, when the angels, thoſe ſons of light, ſurround him with their adoring multitudes, and make his praiſes the ſubject of their immortal ſongs! but this is the honour he covets, the joy for which he endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, to bring many ſons unto glory, to reſtore as great numbers as he can out of the ruins of the fallen race, to train them

up in the paths of virtue and holineſs, and then, the proper time for it being come, to beſtow immortality upon them: for this end he calls upon thee to remember him; 'tis thy advantage he propoſes; and great, unſpeakably great, is the privilege accruing from this duty, if thou knoweſt how to improve it; and to thy improvement of it nothing more is neceſſary than ſincerity on thy part; inaſmuch as God will never fail to aſſiſt all thoſe with the quickening influences of his grace and ſpirit who do their beſt, and will accept their weak, becauſe well-meant, endeavours to pleaſe him, through the mediation of his well-beloved Son, whoſe meritorious death and paſſion is repreſented to them, and remember'd by them in this ordinance.

SECT. VI.

6. BE this then, O my ſoul, thy great, thy only concern, to be approv'd of thy God and Saviour, to come with enlighten'd views, with fervent deſires, and holy diſpoſitions, and to be found a worthy, that thou mayeſt be a welcome gueſt. For thou canſt not think, O my ſoul, that 'tis alike indifferent with what temper thou makeſt thy approaches to this ſacred feſtival.

val. Does the pious *Pſalmiſt*, even under the *legal diſpenſation*, when there was ſo much outward pomp and ceremony in the worſhip of God, lay ſuch ſtreſs on inward purity, and moral goodneſs and rectitude? does he beg of God to examine and prove him, to try his reins and his heart, and make his appeal to him as having walked in his integrity, and had his loving-kindneſs before his eyes, and then reſolve, *I will waſh mine hands in innocence, ſo will I compaſs thine altar, O Lord?* and is leſs regard had to the qualification of the worſhipper, where the worſhip is more refin'd and ſpiritual? was it a more ſolemn thing to attend the ſacrifice of a ſlain beaſt, than it is to commemorate the ſacrifice of the Son of God? but how ſhall I who am but ſinful duſt and aſhes, come before the Lord? how preſent myſelf among the adorers of the moſt high God? he hath ſhewed thee, O my ſoul, what he requires of thee. Examine thyſelf, both as to thy *notions* of the duty before thee, the *nature* and the *deſign* of it, and as to thy *fitneſs* to partake of ſo high a privilege. Lay the foundation of faithfulneſs to God and man, to thy maſter and to thy fellow diſciples, in being faithful and true to thyſelf; diligently ſearch thy *memory*, and ſee what the general courſe of thy life hath been, and whether there are not ſome particular great tranſgreſſions for which thou haſt not yet been ſo thoroughly humbled as

thou ſhouldſt; deſcend into thy *heart*, and if there be any favourite luſt, any unmortified habit of vice that lurks there, deſiſt not from thy enquiries till thou haſt found it, and, having found it, drag it into the light, ſhame thyſelf for it, and ſpare it not; for, alas, what will it avail thee to deceive thyſelf, when God is not mocked? the deluſion may pleaſe and flatter, and, while it laſts, fill thee with towering imaginations, confident hopes, and ſtrange overflowings of joy, eſpecially at the *Holy Table*, from a falſe apprehenſion that all the benefits enjoy'd by the true diſciples of Jeſus are thine. But how ſhort-liv'd muſt the peace, the pleaſure, the hope be, which is all fallacious and groundleſs? thy pleaſures will only reſemble flaſhes of lightning in a dark night, which cauſe a momentary brightneſs, but preſently vaniſhing, give additional horrors to the remaining darkneſs: haſt thou after fairly and fully debating it, already ſettled this grand point? take the comfort of thy ſincerity, and doubt not of a free and kind admiſſion by the maſter of the feaſt to his *Table*: however, do not therefore immediately conclude all farther *examination* and *preparation* needleſs. Haſt thou not been too indulgent in ſome things? too deficient in others? has not ſome bad temper grown upon thee? ſome paſſion broke its bounds? a ſpirit of pride or ſenſuality, or worldineſs, or indifference

to

to the welfare and happineſs of others, tho' it does not reign in thee, yet recover'd too much power? humbly and earneſtly entreat forgiveneſs for it, and ſtrength againſt it; beg of God, the *Father of ſpirits*, to reſtore thee from thy wandrings; put all things into the beſt order thou art able thyſelf, and ſtedfaſtly reſolve not to allow thyſelf in any temper or degree of any temper, in any action or omiſſion of any action, which the goſpel does not allow thee in.

SECT. VII.

7. LET me conſider, O my ſoul, this is but one among many religious duties which I am to perform with the ſame ſeriouſneſs and ſincerity I do this. Whenever I worſhip God, whether in publick or private, as I hope to do it acceptably, I am to cleanſe my hands before I draw nigh unto him, and to diſcharge my heart of every foreign care, that ſo I may be able to attend upon God without diſtraction, and have my mind poſſeſs'd with a holy awe of the divine majeſty. Let me not ſet one duty above another, nor by the preparation I make for the *Lord's-Supper* be tempted to think I may be more careleſs

and negligent in the ordinary exerciſes of religion. The preparation of the heart is always neceſſary when we take upon us to ſpeak to the great Lord of heaven and earth; and if by way of introduction to any particular ordinance, as this of the *Lord's-Supper*, it be uſual to ſpend more time in ſelf-recollection, and other exerciſes of devout retirement, to the intent we may have our hearts ſet in order, and all things in a readineſs againſt the approaching ſeaſon; the foundation of this practice ſeems to be that 'tis proper to do this ſometimes, and no time is reckon'd more proper for ſuch a work than before receiving the *Lord's-Supper*, as that ordinance is not wont to revolve ſo often as the ſtated worſhip of the *Lord's-Day*, and the nature of the inſtitution is more entirely and diſtinguiſhingly evangelical, or chriſtian: upon this account, as I ſhall not make it an indiſpenſible rule to have the very ſame ſet preparation every time I receive the *Sacrament*, whether neceſſary or not neceſſary, convenient or not convenient, nor baniſh myſelf from the *Lord's-Table* when I have not an opportunity for it, (ſince this would be to bind myſelf where God hath left me free) ſo, as often, and as far, as I find it expedient, I ſhall commune with my own heart, and endeavour to awaken and raiſe my ſpirit by previous exerciſes before I enter upon the common duties of divine worſhip,

and

and ſhall always charge my ſoul not to ruſh into the preſence of God in an irreverent and indevout manner, leſt I draw down his diſpleaſure upon me at the very time I profeſs to honour his name.

SECT. VIII.

8. DO I not love thee, O my Saviour? I humbly truſt I can ſay, thou knoweſt all things, thou knoweſt that I love thee. Either I am a ſtranger to my own heart, and ignorant after what objects it breathes and aſpires, or I unfeignedly, I prevailingly love thee. Art thou the darling of thine Almighty Father, his chief delight? and art thou not mine? does not my ſoul follow hard after thee? prefer thy friendſhip to that of the whole world, eſteem all thoſe marks and traces of thine image which prove my relation to thee, and intereſt in thee, more than the peculiar treaſure of kings? does it not ardently deſire to be better acquainted with thee, according to the diſcoveries that are made of thee in the goſpel? would not all the pleaſures and entertainments of life be inſipid and even tireſome without thee? to be with thee, would not my ſoul willingly quit the body; even this moment didſt thou call

call her, and ſhe were aſſur'd that her ſeparation from all things here below would be followed with a nearer union with thee? I love thee, O Jeſus, but not as I would, not as I ought to love thee! when I think of thy perſonal excellencies, thy condeſcenſions, thy ſufferings, thy death, and the glorious fruits of them, I am not able to conceive, much leſs deſcribe, the love I owe thee: I can only ſay, in general, that my love ſhould have no other bounds than the capacity of my heart; I ſhould love thee as much as I can love thee, and thus it is I would love thee. O let thy love kindle mine; let it mount into a flame; let this flame conſume every viſionary idol that uſurps any part of the honour due to my Saviour; let it enliven every power, direct and conſecrate every thought, every affection, every deſign: let me and all I poſſeſs be a ſacrifice of love: to thee I devote it all, through whom all things are mine, and who art more than all other things can poſſibly be to me.

SECT. IX.

9. WHAT abundant reaſon, O moſt bleſſed Saviour, have I to rejoice and be glad in thee! In thee I have determin'd to rejoice always; in the contemplation

templation of thy perſon, thy goſpel, thy virtues, thy conqueſts, and thy glory, and even in thy croſs; in all the great things thou haſt done for us and we already enjoy, and in the much greater thou haſt promis'd and we yet farther wait for. I will heighten the common bleſſings of this life by my joy in thee, and by rejoicing in thee under all the evils and troubles of it will learn to forget or make light of them all, and to weep as if I wept not. Thou art my ſanctuary and my hope; here I take refuge when purſued by my griefs, and doubts, and fears, even in thee, and the ſeveral ways I have of converſing with thee. O Jeſus! thou giveſt light to thoſe that are in darkneſs, ſtrength to the weak, reſt to the weary, and comfort to the diſtreſſed. O my Saviour! as *nothing* is wanting in the way of aſſiſtance and encouragement on thy part, I hope *leſs* ſhall be wanting on mine than hath hitherto been, in returns of praiſe, and ſervice, and obedience for the unſearchable riches of thy goodneſs.

SECT. X.

10. TELL me, O thou whom my ſoul loveth, my Saviour and my Lord, how I ſhall beſt expreſs my thanks to

to thee, among the other teſtimonies of thy regard to my happineſs, for this wiſe, this kind inſtitution of the *Supper*, which, together with thy legacy of peace as nearly related to and cloſely linked with it, thou haſt bequeath'd to thy church! I am very ſenſible that living in the neglect of this ordinance would not ſhew my thankfulneſs for it, and have therefore determin'd to go, not only to the houſe of God with the *multitude* of them that keep holy *thy Day*, but with the *ſmaller number* that delight to honour thee at *thy Table*. And, to let the world ſee, I am not ſubmitting to a diſagreeable taſk, which I would gladly be excuſed from did I know how to find an evaſion, I will go with a holy alacrity, and ſhall not be ſorry to have the joy of my heart ſhine out in the light and ſerenity of my countenance, ſo there be no appearance of affectation in it. Draw me, O my Saviour, by the bands of love! thou haſt thus drawn me, and I feel the ſweet conſtraint! O thou bright morning ſtar, irradiate the region of my ſoul with thy heavenly beams! thou haſt done it, and I bleſs the ſacred influence! O my moſt worthy advocate and interceſſor, as there is no coming unto the Father but by thee, ſo by thee it is I make my addreſſes, and in thy mediation, under the goodneſs and mercy of God, I place my truſt! preſent me to the divine Majeſty, and plead with him for

me

me in virtue of thy atoning ſacrifice, and obedience unto death. Thou doſt continually diſcharge this friendly office for all the ſincerely penitent and faithful, and in this confidence I humbly offer up theſe my ſupplications to the Father of lights, and the Father of mercies.

A

PRAYER.

O THOU infinite and eternal Majeſty! the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and our Father in heaven, vouchſafe with an eye of favour and compaſſion to behold thy ſinful creature, who now falls proſtrate before thee, in humble adoration of thy diſtinguiſhing and moſt undeſerved goodneſs to the children of men, and to me in particular, which I acknowledge to have been ſuch as, beyond meaſure, to enhance the guilt of my offences againſt thee. With what ſincerity, O Lord, thou deſireſt the converſion of ſinners, the proſperity of thy ſaints, and the happineſs of all that are upright in heart, thou haſt abundantly diſcovered in the incarnation and death of thy well-beloved

loved Son, our most worthy mediator and advocate, Jesus Christ, and in the rich variety of means which thou hast kindly provided for the healing the manifold disorders of our nature, and our continual progress towards perfection: as for all these I bless and praise thy wise goodness, so, in a particular manner, and not least of all, for the institution of the *Holy Supper*, which coming recommended by the authority of my blessed Saviour, and bearing his name, as it was appointed in honour of his memory, I desire ever to set a very high value upon. Being not only allow'd, but invited, to attend this *Sacred Feast*, I joyfully accept the invitation, humbly trusting that thy grace hath made me in some degree meet to partake of so invaluable a privilege; and entreating thee, that what is farther wanting in order to my communicating with yet greater advantage and acceptance, the same grace may supply. O let the blood of Jesus thy Son cleanse me from all sin; and his Spirit, even that eternal Spirit through which he offer'd himself without spot unto God, enlighten, sanctify, and raise my spirit, naturally dark, depress and polluted! Give me understanding in all thy precepts, and help me to discern the meaning, and to attain the ends of that *Holy Ordinance* for which I am preparing. Let the sacred fire, falling from heaven, consume my drossy affections, and kindle a flame

a flame of divine love in my breaſt, never to be extinguiſh'd. Grant, O Lord! that I may approach with the deepeſt ſenſe of my own meanneſs, unworthineſs and guilt, and with the moſt exalted apprehenſions of thy holineſs and mercy, both which thou haſt ſo wonderfully diſplay'd in the method of our redemption by Jeſus Chriſt; that I may receive the pledges of thy forgiving love, and the memorials of my Saviour's bloody paſſion with a lively faith, an abounding hope, with gratitude unfeigned, and joy unſpeakable; and may ſo feel the attractive influence of his example, the efficacy of his death, and the power of his reſurrection, that I may have my whole ſoul transform'd into love, be all kindneſs and charity to men, and zeal for God and Jeſus, may die unto ſin and live unto righteouſneſs, be able to tread on all the power of the enemy, to deny myſelf, deſpiſe the blandiſhments and temptations of the world, have my converſation in heaven, and overcome all oppoſition in the way to it; and, finally, after having lov'd and ſerv'd and followed my Saviour without ſeeing him, may be with him, according to his own prayer, where he is, to behold his glory, and, with all the heavenly multitudes, aſcribe bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb for ever and ever.

loved Son, our moſt worthy mediator and advocate, Jeſus Chriſt, and in the rich variety of means which thou haſt kindly provided for the healing the manifold diſorders of our nature, and our continual progreſs towards perfection: as for all theſe I bleſs and praiſe thy wiſe goodneſs, ſo, in a particular manner, and not leaſt of all, for the inſtitution of the *Holy Supper*, which coming recommended by the authority of my bleſſed Saviour, and bearing his name, as it was appointed in honour of his memory, I deſire ever to ſet a very high value upon. Being not only allow'd, but invited, to attend this *Sacred Feaſt*, I joyfully accept the invitation, humbly truſting that thy grace hath made me in ſome degree meet to partake of ſo invaluable a privilege; and entreating thee, that what is farther wanting in order to my communicating with yet greater advantage and acceptance, the ſame grace may ſupply. O let the blood of Jeſus thy Son cleanſe me from all ſin; and his Spirit, even that eternal Spirit through which he offer'd himſelf without ſpot unto God, enlighten, ſanctify, and raiſe my ſpirit, naturally dark, depreſt and polluted! Give me underſtanding in all thy precepts, and help me to diſcern the meaning, and to attain the ends of that *Holy Ordinance* for which I am preparing. Let the ſacred fire, falling from heaven, conſume my droſſy affections, and kindle a flame

a flame of divine love in my breaſt, never to be extinguiſh'd. Grant, O Lord! that I may approach with the deepeſt ſenſe of my own meanneſs, unworthineſs and guilt, and with the moſt exalted apprehenſions of thy holineſs and mercy, both which thou haſt ſo wonderfully diſplay'd in the method of our redemption by Jeſus Chriſt; that I may receive the pledges of thy forgiving love, and the memorials of my Saviour's bloody paſſion with a lively faith, an abounding hope, with gratitude unfeigned, and joy unſpeakable; and may ſo feel the attractive influence of his example, the efficacy of his death, and the power of his reſurrection, that I may have my whole ſoul transform'd into love, be all kindneſs and charity to men, and zeal for God and Jeſus, may die unto ſin and live unto righteouſneſs, be able to tread on all the power of the enemy, to deny myſelf, deſpiſe the blandiſhments and temptations of the world, have my converſation in heaven, and overcome all oppoſition in the way to it; and, finally, after having lov'd and ſerv'd and followed my Saviour without ſeeing him, may be with him, according to his own prayer, where he is, to behold his glory, and, with all the heavenly multitudes, aſcribe bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb for ever and ever.

AT

The Lord's-Table.

SECT. I.

O MY ſoul! the happy, the wiſh'd for time is come; but will quickly be gone again. Lay hold of the opportunity, make the utmoſt advantage of it, that, when paſt and gone, it may not be loſt. Turn away thine eyes from beholding vanity, and look unto Jeſus. Be all attention and reverence, thy thoughts united and elevated, every power engag'd, and all thy affections preſent, to wait on thy Lord, and miniſter to him at his *Table*.

SECT. II.

AND O thou who alone knoweſt the hearts of all men, and alone haſt them in thy power, the almighty and omnipotent God, help thou mine infirmities,

ties, fix my mind, prone elſe to wander, cauſe every good ſeed thy hand hath ſown to ſpring up, perfect thine own work, ſpeak peace to my ſoul, bid every vain and every tumultuous paſſion be ſtill; the ſacrifice is ready, ſend down the ſacred fire, and help me in the ſame act to honour the *Father* and the *Son*, that I may have fellowſhip with *both*.

SECT. III.

BEHOLD, my ſoul, the lamb of God which taketh away the ſin of the world! rightly is *he* call'd a *lamb* whoſe innocence was ſpotleſs, and his meekneſs and patience invincible; and the *lamb of God* for his ſuperior excellence and dignity, and his being choſen to this office by the *Father*: he was led as a lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before his ſhearers is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth; neither guile or complaint was found in his mouth, much leſs curſing and bitterneſs. Doſt thou profeſs thyſelf a follower of the lamb, and glory in the title? learn then of him to be harmleſs and blameleſs, meek and lowly in heart, alike averſe from doing or deſerving evil, and ready to ſuffer it.

SECT. IV.

BUT how does this lamb of God take away ſin? by bearing it in his own body on the tree. He was wounded for our iniquities, the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him. O heavy load! which ſunk the Son of God, in his body, to the grave, and, had it lain unremoved, would have ſunk the world into ruins. Worthy is the lamb that was ſlain to receive power and riches, and wiſdom and ſtrength, and honour and glory and bleſſing.

SECT. V.

THIS is the body of Chriſt. This ſacramental bread is intended to ſignify and repreſent the body of Chriſt that was *given for us*, as an offering and a ſacrifice to God, for a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour; and *broken for us*, as the bread in this ſacrament is broken before it is diſtributed. His ſacred fleſh was torn and diſfigur'd with the ſcourges, pierc'd and violated with the nails and the ſpear. The lamb that was ſeen in the midſt of the throne had before been ſtretched on

on the croſs; made a ſpectacle to God, to angels, and to men, highly approv'd and accepted of the firſt, adored by the ſecond, mourn'd by ſome, derided and inſulted over by others, of the laſt. O my ſoul, in thy judgment of this crucified Jeſus take for thy guide the only-wiſe God, and for thy pattern in thy behaviour towards him, ſaints and angels!

SECT. VI.

DIDST thou, O Jeſus, with whom the moſt precious things and moſt excellent beings that can be named among creatures are not once to be compared, didſt thou give thy ſacred ſelf for me on the croſs? and art thou ready to give thy ſelf to me in thy *Supper?* I give, I conſecrate myſelf, without the leaſt reſerve to thee. I could wiſh I was more worthy of thy acceptance. But ſuch as I have, and am, give I unto thee, and I give it heartily as unto the Lord, to whom I confeſs myſelf to owe more than I can give. O, do thou make me more like thyſelf, ſhed more of thy beauty and lovelineſs upon me, ſanctify me in every part and power, help me to be more perfect in every divine attainment, that I may be leſs unworthy of

thee! and, to the ſacrifice of thy broken body, grant, O my Saviour, I may be able to join the ſacrifice of a broken and contrite heart, which thou wilt not deſpiſe; thou diedſt for me, to thee I will henceforth live!

SECT. VII.

MY bleſſed Saviour did not ſuffer in his body only. No; it was the leaſt part of his ſufferings that was viſible: his ſoul was ſorrowful even unto death, and labour'd under ſuch an agony in the garden that he ſweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground, pray'd, *Father, if poſſible let this cup paſs from me*, and had an angel diſpatch'd expreſs to comfort him. Nay, he was heard crying out on the croſs, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Strange language for the Son of God! Does God forſake his own Son? the holy, the merciful God his innocent, his well-beloved Son? he does for a time, ſo as to ſuſpend the uſual irradiations of his countenance, and to leave him in the hands of his enemies, to do unto him what they pleaſed. And when Jeſus ſuffers and dies, ſhall a living man complain, a man for the puniſhment of his ſins? when he

he ſuffers to expiate the ſins of others, ſhall I not be contented to ſuffer the pains and afflictions neceſſary for the cure of my own ſinful affections, and the trial and improvement of my own virtues? ſurely, if he laments his being forſaken, who was undoubtedly the Son of God, I have no juſt reaſon to queſtion my being a child of God, or (ſuppoſing myſelf to be ſo) to think I am hardly dealt with, merely becauſe deſtitute of thoſe ſenſible conſolations which I have ſometimes enjoy'd.

SECT. VIII.

WAS there ever ſorrow like that of my Saviour's? can any thing be imagin'd to exceed it? yes, O my Soul, tho' his ſorrows were unconceivably great, his love was greater; for his love made him willing to paſs through ſuch a ſea of ſorrows; his love brought him to that dark hour, and ſupported him in it; love to the rebellious ſons of men, love to thee, O my ſoul! Hereupon I cannot forbear crying out, was ever love like his love? and, reflecting on the unparallel'd greatneſs both of his ſorrow and his love, I farther ſay to myſelf, is there any evil like the evil of ſin, the guilty, the curſed occaſion of this dolo-

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rous ſcene? from whence I am unavoidably led to aſk, what ingratitude, O my ſoul, can be equal to thine, if after all that thy Redeemer hath done and ſuffer'd for thee, thou wilt not be perſuaded to break thy league with his enemies, that is, with thy ſins; Chriſt having no enemy but ſin, or ſuch as ſin hath made enemies to him?

SECT. IX.

WHY, O my ſoul! is this bread called the *Communion of the body of Chriſt*, but at once to ſignify the object commemorated, a dying crucified Jeſus, and the near relation among thoſe who join in commemorating him; that, becauſe the bread is one, we alſo being many, are one body, foraſmuch as we are all partakers of the one bread. Chriſtians conſpiring in this ſacred action may juſtly be called a *Communion*, ſince the bread is one of which they jointly partake, and the ſacrifice one and the ſame repreſented by this bread, they are hereby taught that all the diſciples of Chriſt, how great ſoever their number be (acknowledging this ſacrifice, and putting their truſt in it, which they declare by their united participation of that one bread which is the memorial of it) conſti-

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tute but one myſtical body, or ſociety, of which they are the members and Chriſt Jeſus is the head. O my ſoul, let thy moſt ardent wiſhes, thy moſt importunate prayers, thy moſt unwearied endeavours, be for the peace and unity of the chriſtian church, that all the faithful in Chriſt may be one, even as thou Father art in the Son, and the Son in thee, that they may be made perfect in one, and dwell and walk in love! And reſolve, O my ſoul, that no prejudice, no provocation ſhall ever alienate thy affections from any of thoſe who are fellow-members of the ſame body with thee, and make thee forget what thou oweſt them, or rather what thou oweſt to thy Saviour, thy regard to whom thou canſt not better expreſs than by thy zeal to promote the peace of his church, and welfare and happineſs of all belonging to it!

SECT. X.

COULD the *Jews* ſay, *Behold how he loved him*, ſeeing *Jeſus* weep at the grave of *Lazarus?* and may I not with much more reaſon cry out, behold how he loved us, when I think of his ſhedding not tears but blood, his vital blood for us? he loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins

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in his blood. His condeſcending to waſh his diſciples feet did not more plainly, or in a more affecting manner diſcover his humility, than his waſhing us in his blood does his love. And for ſuch love, what is the moſt proper return but love? what other return can I make that will be accepted, if love be wanting? if I love him, he firſt loved me, his love was a love of compaſſion and benevolence, mine is a love of gratitude; mine a debt, his free. If I love my fellow chriſtian, if I love all mankind, if I love my enemies, the honour is his to have ſhewed me the way; and having ſuch a guide and pattern, it would be an indelible reproach upon me not to follow him.

SECT. XI.

OBSERVE, O my ſoul! the time when thy Lord gave his diſciples the new commandment of love, becauſe, tho' only a circumſtance, 'tis exceeding inſtructive and quickening; it ſeems to have been ſoon after he had been inſtituting his *Supper:* and what more proper ſeaſon for the delivery of this law, or ſtronger conviction of the reaſonableneſs of it, than *that* afforded by this ordinance, in which the love

love of Jeſus is ſeen riſing, and ſpreading itſelf beyond all bounds, and triumphing over all oppoſition? if the commandment is new, in reſpect of the height to which the diſciples of Chriſt are to carry their love, the example is ſtill more new and uncommon by which it comes recommended. Should they be called to lay down their lives for the brethren, they would herein only love one another as he, their Lord and Maſter, hath loved them. Nor can I regard it as ſuch a hard ſaying, that I am to love my enemies (which he alſo enjoins me) ſince, when we were enemies Chriſt died for us, that he might reconcile us to God, and, when dying, pray'd for his enemies, enemies whom nothing but his blood would ſatisfy, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* I will learn, O my Saviour, how to love, of thee! never was the world taught a more excellent leſſon; never before had this leſſon ſo excellent a teacher.

SECT. XII.

THIS cup is the New Teſtament, or covenant, in Chriſt's blood; the blood of the new covenant which was ſhed for many for the remiſſion of ſins. *Firſt*, this

this blood of atonement was ſhed for the remiſſion of ſins; *then*, after a ſhort ſpace intervening, the goſpel dipenſation was more fully open'd, the new covenant ſolemnly proclaim'd, and repentance and remiſſion of ſins preach'd in the name of Chriſt among all nations. Beſides the confirmation which the goſpel, containing God's covenant of grace with mankind, receives from the blood, or death of Chriſt, conſidered with all its circumſtances, this blood, being the blood of a ſacrifice, appointed by God, and repreſented in the *Sacramental Supper*, is, as ſuch, a ſign or ſeal on God's part by which the covenant is ſolemniz'd, and our aſſurance of his deſigns of favour and mercy towards us render'd as compleat as we can reaſonably wiſh it to be. Think well of this, O my ſoul, and never more harbour the leaſt ſuſpicion of the freeneſs, the abundance, or the extent of the divine mercy! The mercy of God is not leſs conſpicuous in the covenant itſelf, and the manner of eſtabliſhing it, than his faithfulneſs is out of queſtion in fulfilling it; only ſeek mercy in the way which the goſpel hath marked out to thee, and doubt not but thou ſhalt find it. The death of Chriſt, and now his life, is thy ſecurity. Let the mercy of God encourage thy hopes, and his faithfulneſs and truth, in keeping covenant, be a pattern to thine.

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SECT. XIII.

O LORD! I am not my own: I never was, never can, never deſire to be ſo, and hope and promiſe never to act as if I was. Truly, I am thy ſervant, thou haſt looſed my bonds. Thine I am by creation, thine by purchaſe, thine by covenant. I confeſs, and triumph in the relation, and acknowledge all the duties reſulting from it. I have ſworn, and cannot repent, that I will keep thy righteous Statutes; and I now joyfully repeat the ſolemn engagement. Here I am; Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? deal with me and mine as ſeemeth good in thy ſight; thy will and not mine ſhall be the rule of my deſires and actions, and thy glory my ſupreme end. 'Tis thine to command and diſpoſe, mine to obey and ſubmit. Thou haſt bought me with a price, even with the precious blood of thy own Son, of which this *ſacramental wine* is a memorial: I therefore, as in gratitude bound, preſent my whole ſelf, body and ſoul to thee, a living ſacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is my reaſonable ſervice, with a full purpoſe of heart to glorify thee with both. I conſider this *ſacramental eating* and *drinking* not only as expreſſive of a very high *privilege* enjoy'd by the worthy communicant,

who is here treated with the condescending freedom of a domestic servant, a guest, a friend of God and of Jesus, but as an *obligation* upon me to behave at all times as thy devoted covenant servant in Christ. O Lord, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of my heart, and prepare my heart unto thee!

When retired, after Receiving.

SECT. I.

HAST thou not, O my soul, this day, had thy dear Lord evidently set forth as crucified before thy eyes, and, by commemorating his death in the *Holy Supper*, declared thyself a disciple of this crucified Jesus? and what is to be the temper of my mind, and my future behaviour, that it may agree with the character of one who professes himself a disciple of such a master? ought I not to be crucified with Christ to the world, the pomps and vanities the riches and pleasures of it? yes certainly. A disciple of Christ is not to be taken up with these things. Did the master embrace a life of meanness and poverty, and voluntarily

tarily ſubmit to a moſt painful and ignominious death? was he not more deſpiſed by the men of the world than he deſpiſed the things of it, and ſhew'd himſelf ſuperior to its ſpirit, its wiſdom, its maxims and temptations? and ſhall the diſciple eagerly covet theſe things, admire them, value himſelf upon them, and place his happineſs in them? in all this would he ſhew himſelf mindful of his profeſſion? or rather would he not ſhamefully forget it? tho' I am not oblig'd to renounce the poſſeſſion, or the moderate uſe of any worldly advantages that providence hath put into my hand, yet I am all ſuch love of them as would weaken and counteract the diviner affections, and much more that which is inconſiſtent with the prevalency of ſuch affections: I am to be of ſuch a temper with regard to theſe earthly things as to be able readily to forego them, to enjoy without abuſing them, and being elated and corrupted by them, and to do all the good I can with them. Can I have ſuch an object often in my view as the Son of God covered with a cloud of affliction; a croſs, and this Lord of glory nail'd to it and expiring upon it, and yet not have my affections at all deadned to the world? have the ſame high thoughts of it, and the ſame fond attachment to it as ever? O my ſoul! 'tis impoſſible, the contemplation of a crucified Jeſus muſt have other effects. It muſt, and, I truſt

it hath. I look unto Jesus, and suddenly the glory of the world disappears, its charms fade, and all its treasures lose their imaginary value. Let those doat on the world who never meditate on a crucified Saviour, never remember him at his *Table*; this I have done, and found the happy influence of that example which my redeemer hath set before me so strong that I no longer follow the world as a captive in chains the triumphal chariot of his conqueror. This, alas! I did as the other slaves of the world in the days of my vanity, but, thanks to my Saviour, am now a conqueror in my turn: his example sets me free, his death hath convinc'd me of my folly, and taught me other and sounder notions of things. Henceforth, not those things which render me less like my Saviour, while he was in the world, shall be the matter of my glorying, but those by which I become conform'd to him, among others, my being victorious over the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, all which are not of the Father, but of the world, which passeth away, and the lusts thereof.

SECT. II.

I WILL not think of pleading with my Saviour, as what must render me dear to him, have I not eaten and drank

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in thy preſence, and honour'd thy memory? being ſenſible that I have no other anſwer to expect, if I am found among the workers of iniquity, than that terrible one, *Depart from me, I know you not.* He will not know me, becauſe I knew him no better; will not think his name honour'd by being taken up by ſuch polluted lips; will be aſhamed to own me for his, becauſe ſo utterly unworthy of his approbation. The greater, my ſoul, thy honour in the near acceſs thou art allow'd to thy redeemer, and the oftener thou profeſſeſt thy ſubjection to him by partaking of the memorials of his body and blood, the greater is thy obligation to obey him, and the greater will be thy guilt if thou doſt not! all the reſt of my life is to correſpond with this particular action, and to make good what I have virtually promis'd in it, tho' I ſhould not have expreſly promis'd it, as I have done, and intend to do again, if God give opportunity.

SECT. III.

BEWARE, O my ſoul! how thou frameſt a deciſive judgment of thy ſtate and character, merely, or chiefly from the manner in which the ſenſitive part of thy nature hath been affected at the *Holy*

Table. Perhaps thy paſſions have been ſtrongly mov'd, thou haſt felt an unuſual livelineſs and flow of ſpirits; or, on the contrary, haſt had a kind of dead weight upon thee which hath bowed thee down to the earth, a more than ordinary confinement in thy thoughts, and languor in thy affections. Now, O my ſoul! in caſe the warmth of thy affections be followed with an anſwerable tenderneſs of conſcience afterwards, happy art thou, and haſt abundant reaſon to be eaſy and thankful; not ſo, if it be only a ſudden guſt of paſſion which leaves thee as much under the power of ſenſual and worldly affections as ever; thy religion is vain, and thou art yet to learn what are the firſt principles of practical chriſtianity. On the other hand, the reflection on the little fervour of the duties thou haſt perform'd, if it hath been owing to thy own neglect, and too great indulgence to the animal life, much more if it hath proceeded from a habit of indevotion, ought to humble thee, and fill thee with an uneaſy concern about thy preſent temper. But, ſuppoſing it not to be chargeable on any ſuch criminal cauſes, (as thou haſt ground to believe it is not when thou art unfeignedly deſirous of doing better, and findeſt thy choice of that which is good, and the determination of thy will to it, more firm and entire, ſo as to be proof againſt the temptations that aſſault thee

thee in thy chriſtian courſe) be not too ſevere in thy cenſure of thyſelf, inaſmuch as God who knoweth thy frame, will make gracious allowances for the weakneſs of it: the thing thou art principally to attend to, is thy habitual diſpoſition, and ordinary conduct. Am I exact and regular in my common deportment, watchful over my thoughts, and careful that the general frame and poſture of my ſpirit be agreeable to my chriſtian profeſſion? am I more circumſpect to avoid temptation, and more reſolv'd and ſucceſsful in my conflict with it? is my converſation in heaven, and my great ſolicitude how I ſhall keep myſelf in the love of God? this being ſuppos'd, I am juſtified to conclude, that the great deſign of the *Lord's-Supper*, and every other goſpel inſtitution, hath been anſwer'd; that I have communicated with profit, if I have not done it with ſo much life and pleaſure as I could have wiſh'd, and may therefore go on my way rejoicing that God hath accepted me.

SECT. IV.

HAST thou not, O my ſoul, this day while commemorating the love of thy Saviour, and exciting thy own by the remembrance of his, reſolved to lead a more

more exemplary, devout, and uſeful life than thou haſt hitherto done? ſuch reſolutions are perfectly juſt, and peculiarly agreeable to the ordinance of the *Supper*; and I will ſuppoſe thine to have been ſincere: yet, ſtop a moment, and conſider thoſe words of thy Saviour to his diſciples, *The ſpirit indeed is willing, but the fleſh is weak.* Even thoſe who want not integrity of heart are too often more forward to purpoſe and promiſe than afterwards they are punctual in fulfilling their engagements, their readineſs to promiſe ſhews the *willingneſs* of the ſpirit, that they have a ſpirit within them which hath ſtrong convictions of duty, and laudable diſpoſitions to the practice of it, while their failure, in part, tho' not entirely, in the performance is a melancholy proof of the *weakneſs* of the fleſh. The *Apoſtles* of Chriſt are a moſt memorable example of this, who bravely reſolv'd to ſtand by their maſter at all hazards, proteſting that tho' they ſhould die with him, yet would they not deny him. Glorious reſolution! but how poorly kept to! for when it came to the trial (to ſay nothing of the traitor *Judas*) all but one forſook him and fled, and he for his part did worſe than forſake him, he denied him; and this ſoon after they had been celebrating the *Supper* with their maſter, and tho' they were zealouſly affected to him, as they had reaſon to be, having receiv'd a thouſand marks of

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the moſt tender friendſhip from him, and three of them been more highly honour'd than the reſt with the ſight of his transfiguration. And is this the end of all? from hence I learn the kind and provident care of our divine maſter in the counſel he gave his diſciples, and the neceſſity of following it, *To watch and pray that they enter'd not into temptation.* I am not to truſt to the duty I have lately perform'd, nor to the devotion, tho' real, I have exercis'd in it, nay, nor to the *grace* which I may have reaſon to think hath been beſtowed on me as the reward of my unfeigned deſire and endeavour to pleaſe God, unleſs I farther add my own continued prayers and vigilance. As the *mere outward action*, in the *Sacrament*, does not convey *grace*, but the ſpirit of God by it, nor is a qualification for receiving it, but the temper of mind, and right intention and probity of ſoul with which I communicate; ſo the influence which this *Sacrament* hath, in the after courſe of my life, to prepare me for the more ready diſcharge of other duties, and to preſerve me in the hour of temptation, does not immediately and neceſſarily flow from the *Sacrament* itſelf, but depends on my doing my part after that ſolemnity is over as well as in the act of receiving: otherwiſe, I ſhall have no cauſe to wonder, if I am worſted by temptations, and quickly loſe my reliſh for the pleaſures of devotion.

tion. Be ſure, then, O my ſoul! to fix this deep in thy remembrance, that neither the love of Chriſt to thee, nor thine to him, nor thy converſing with him at his *Table*, however encouraging and delightful, will abſolutely ſecure thee from temptation, (God for wiſe reaſons, permitting temptations of divers kinds to befall us for the trial of our virtue and fidelity) or in it, without watchfulneſs and prayer. In prudence then take care that both theſe accompany and follow all thy good purpoſes and diſpoſitions, whether at the *Table* of the Lord, or at any other time when thy affections are more than uſually enlarg'd and ſtirred within thee; that ſo whatever temptations occur to draw thee off from thy duty, or to make thee leſs vigorous in it, being mindful of the vows of God that are upon thee, thou mayſt be more than conqueror over them all.

SECT. V.

THE cloud which hath guided thy meditations hitherto has a bright as well as a dark ſide, 'tis a cloud of glory. For the preſent then change the ſcene, O my ſoul! from the humiliation of the Son of God, which thou haſt been call'd to remember in his *Supper*, turn thine eyes to his exalted ſtate, from a dying to a riſen

Saviour,

Saviour, from his firſt coming in the form of a ſervant, to his ſecond appearance in the form of God; when being ſat down on the throne of his glory, and all nations gather'd before him, he ſhall ſeparate them one from the other, as a ſhepherd divideth the ſheep from the goats, and abſolve or condemn, reward or puniſh them, according as their works have been. Yet, a little while, O my ſoul! and he that ſhall come will come, and will not tarry; and when he ſhall appear, they alſo that have waited for him ſhall appear with him in glory, having their bodies rais'd from the grave, and made like unto his. With this proſpect I will comfort myſelf, under all the infelicities of life, and apprehenſions of death. I muſt die, paſs through the dark valley, drink of the cold cup that my Saviour drank of; but, if I belong to him as a living member of his myſtical body, I ſhall riſe again to a bleſſed immortality. It was not the deſign of his death to excuſe his followers from dying, but, as connected with his reſurrection, to ſave them from the terrors of that laſt enemy; foraſmuch as death is now only a dark paſſage to the regions of immortal light and glory, and we lay down this body, with all its frailties and imperfections, to take it up again without them, bright, active, and incorruptible. Look forward, O my ſoul, to that glorious day! think, what a joyful, what

what a ſurprizing meeting that will be of perfected minds with their glorified bodies, of all the ſaints that have ever liv'd in the moſt diſtant regions and ages of it, with one another! think of that divine and eternal feſtival in which they ſhall all join with one heart, in the kingdom of their Father; and at which thou, O my ſoul, ſhalt be a tranſported gueſt! Now, we neceſſarily meet in ſeparate, and alas! too often in divided and oppoſite communions, eſtrang'd and alienated in our affections for want of knowing one another better; now, they are but few with whom thou canſt perſonally join in the common duties of divine worſhip, ſtill fewer in the *Lord's-Supper*; thy many infirmities abate the pleaſure of thy beſt performances, and the pleaſure, as it is imperfect, ſo is tranſient too; hereafter, all the followers of the *Lamb*, all the faithful ſervants of God, a multitude without number, ſhall worſhip together in the temple above, unite their praiſes to *God* and the *Lamb*, mingle their affections like ſo many confluent ſtreams in one common ocean of love, be deliver'd from every temptation, and from every grief, be made perfect in knowledge, holineſs and bliſs, and ſo continue to everlaſting ages. O what life and ſpirit ſhould the meditation of this infuſe into all my religious performances! how ſhouldſt thou ſtretch all thy faculties, O my ſoul, and aim to do the will of God as the angels

angels do in heaven, and as thou thyſelf ſhalt do it when thou art come thither! Bleſſed time, when all upright minds ſhall ſee that wonderful perſon face to face whom now they behold as through a glaſs darkly! Bleſſed time, when the preſence of the Redeemer ſhall make all memorials of him needleſs! O moſt bleſſed time, the expectation of ſo many ages, when the church ſhall receive the immediate and fulleſt emanations of that love which ſhe is now raviſh'd with the contemplations of! Then ſhalt thou acknowledge, O my ſoul, that eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither can enter into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath laid up for them that love him! Then ſhalt thou reap the fruits of thy Lord's victories, and thy own, of his victory over death, and of thy own through him, over ſin and the world! Then, in fine, will it be true, in the higheſt ſenſe the words are capable of, *That we are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general aſſembly and church of the firſtborn which are written in heaven; to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, to Jeſus the mediator of the new covenant, and to God the judge of all.*

A

PRAYER.

GREAT and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty — what then art thou whoſe power hath produc'd and ſuſtains, whoſe wiſdom both contriv'd and directs, and whoſe goodneſs crowns them all! I praiſe thee, O my God, from the bottom of my ſoul, that, having made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and determin'd the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation that they ſhould ſeek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, thou haſt in the courſe of thy providence ſo ordered the circumſtances of my birth and education, that I ſhould be a partaker of the grace of the goſpel from my earlieſt years, and know the wonderful works of God, even thoſe things which many prophets and kings deſired to ſee and hear, and could not. For all my powers and faculties, as a reaſonable creature, all the teſtimonies of thy paternal care, all the effects of thy common bounty and goodneſs, in the courſe of my life, I bleſs and magnify thy holy name; but more eſpecially for thy diſtinguiſhing grace and mercy in Jeſus Chriſt; in whom while I rejoice

rejoice and glory, I cannot forget to pray that all mankind may enjoy the ſame happineſs, and the whole world know that thou haſt ſo loved it as to give thine only-begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life. Hear, O moſt gracious God, the prayers of thy faithful people for the enlargement of that kingdom of truth and righteouſneſs which thou haſt ſet up among men, that the religion of Chriſt may be profeſs'd and practis'd in its greateſt ſimplicity; grace be with all them that love the Lord Jeſus in ſincerity, their numbers continually increaſe, their conſolations abound, the multitude of them that believe be of one heart and one ſoul, and the church of Chriſt appear to be the ſchool where immortal ſouls are train'd up for the more perfect worſhip and the everlaſting felicity of the heavenly world. O let not thy grace be receiv'd in vain by me! let it not be in vain that I have been ſo fully taught the way of the Lord, have had both external and internal aſſiſtances, and every ſort of encouragement, that I might abound in all the fruits of holineſs which are by Chriſt to the glory and praiſe of God. Forgive me, O merciful Father, that I have made thee returns ſo unſuitable to thy great goodneſs towards me, to the vaſt and numberleſs obligations thou haſt laid me under, and the repeated engagements I have taken upon

myſelf! O forgive me the coldneſs of my love, my ſloth and inactivity, the little proficiency I have made in the virtues of the chriſtian and divine life, with the advantage of ſo excellent a rule, ſo perfect an example, ſo free an acceſs to the throne of grace, ſuch almighty aids, and the proſpect of ſo glorious a reward! And, O may the conſideration of thy readineſs to pardon fill me with an ingenuous hatred and deteſtation of all ſin; and my abhorrence of ſin, and care to avoid it, and all the occaſions of and temptations to it for the future, be a ſatisfying proof that all my ſins are actually forgiven me, through the redemption which is in Jeſus Chriſt thy Son, whoſe death I have been ſhewing forth in his ſupper! And may the God of peace who brought again from the dead the great ſhepherd of the ſheep through the blood of the everlaſting covenant, make me perfect to do his will, fulfilling in me the good pleaſure of his goodneſs and the work of faith with power. Help me to carry in mind the deſign of one duty to diſpoſe me for another, and of all the inſtrumental duties of religion to beget and ſtrengthen thoſe exalted principles and habits of goodneſs in my ſoul, by which it will be more and more ripen'd for the life of heaven. By faith let me be able to ſee him who is inviſible, and always to walk as in his preſence, and be more affected and influenc'd

by

by the contemplation of an abſent Saviour, in every view of him. While I meditate on the bleſſed Jeſus enduring the contradiction of ſinners, and humbling himſelf unto death, even the death of the croſs, may I be inſtructed what to expect in the preſent life, and after what manner to behave under all the ſufferings and afflictions of it; and may a riſen and exalted Redeemer elevate my heart above all the vanities of this tranſitory ſtate of things to that happy world, whither he, my Lord, and the forerunner of all the faithful, is gone; that I may know him, and the power of his reſurrection, and count all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt; for whoſe ſake let me be willing to ſuffer the loſs of all things, not counting my life dear to me ſo I may finiſh my courſe with Joy. Give me, O Lord, to feel more of the mighty power of thy grace, concurring with the goſpel of thy Son, to mortify every inordinate deſire, to confirm every good purpoſe, to purify and regulate my affections, and to change my whole ſoul more and more into a divine image and likeneſs! By that grace let me be enabled to trample on all the temptations to ſin, and to keep a conſcience void of offence both towards God, and towards man; that my love to thee may be ſuperlative, and, tho' not adequate to thy excellencies and thy benefits, which it can

never be, may bear ſome proportion to my capacities; that my devotion may be unaffected and fervent, my reſignation entire, and obedience chearful, uniform, and conſtant. To men let me be juſt and charitable, kindly affectioned, ready to do good and to communicate, as I have ability and opportunity, carrying it towards all with a mild, a peaceable and chriſtian ſpirit: while, as to myſelf, I am ſober-minded, poor in ſpirit, and pure in heart, and tho' not free from all mental irregularities, am yet getting ground upon them daily; oppoſing my inclinations as often as they oppoſe my duty, deny myſelf, am temperate in all things, bridle my tongue, and labour to be an example of patience, meekneſs, contentment, and to come behind in no good thing, looking for the mercy of God unto eternal life; that ſo, when I ſhall have done the work which thou haſt given me to do, and ſuffer'd all that thou ſaweſt meet for the trial of my faith, and hope, and ſubmiſſion to thy will, I may finally inherit the promiſes which thou haſt made us in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, *Amen.*

Rev. v. 13. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and ſuch as are in the ſea, and all that are in them, heard I ſaying, Bleſſing and Honour and Glory and Power be unto him that ſitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

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